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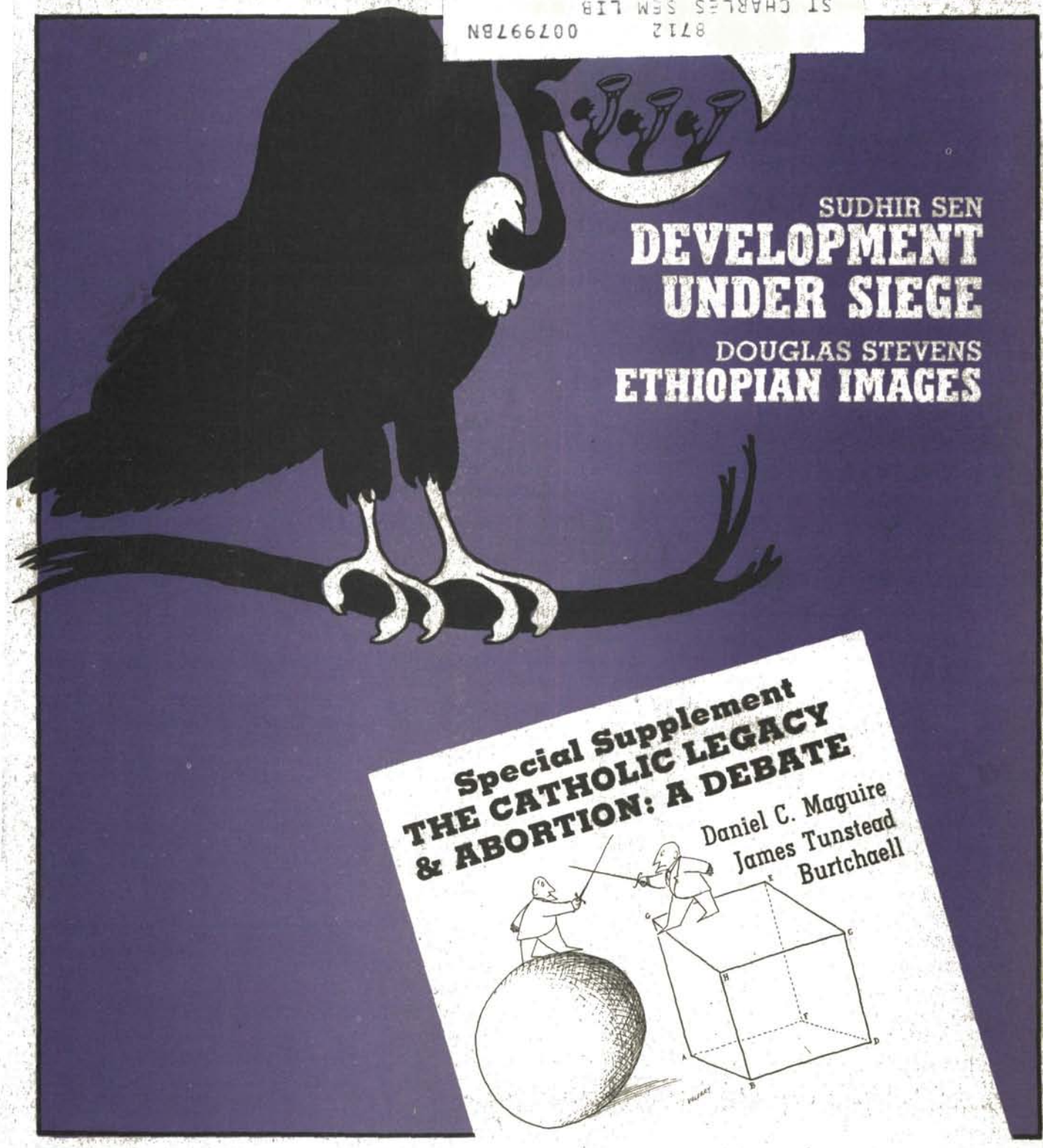

SUDHIR SEN
DEVELOPMENT UNDER SIEGE

DOUGLAS STEVENS
ETHIOPIAN IMAGES

Special Supplement
THE CATHOLIC LEGACY & ABORTION: A DEBATE

Daniel C. Maguire
James Tunstead Burtchaell

CORRESPONDENCE

The essence is true

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: With regard to Graham Greene's letter [October 23] about my "lies" in retelling his story about Padre Pio:

I have checked with the person to whom Greene told the story twenty years ago, Mr. Peter Glenville, the British director. He confirms the basic facts, to wit, that Greene told him he had traveled to Padre Pio's village and had a strange, quasi-supernatural encounter with one of Pio's priests. I was, to be sure, in error in some of the details. But the essence of the story is true.

Oddly, just last week, while reading Philip Ziegler's biography of the late Diana Cooper, I came across a mention of the exact same story, told to Cooper by Greene.

Why Mr. Greene is attempting to disassociate himself from a story he has, quite obviously, told to a number of people, I cannot say.

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

Admitting connections

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Like many of the "liberal" readers and writers of *Commonweal,* I feel uncomfortable with the church's pronouncements on sexual matters and rather anxious to disassociate myself from conservative views and viewers. Perhaps I'm not alone, either, in a certain ambivalence; I enunciate social arguments that my personal history belies.

In public, I find the most acceptable social ploy is to knock the pope (historically an orthodox sport), concede the Inquisition, and change the subject. Sometimes I find myself explaining, in my most reasonable, *Commonweal* editorial voice, that popes come and go, and that as the ban against usury went, so will that against, say, contraception. In most times and places, I continue professorially, the clergy have wisely refrained from questioning the laity too closely about their sexual practices. After all, nobody excommunicated those legendary Catholic kings and queens notorious for their bastards and playmates. Indeed, some of them were both devout and generous, and they didn't expect God or the church to be stricter about sex than about other sins. Avarice, for example, was considered a worse sin than lechery, and yet how many priests have given everything to the poor?

But with this triumphant peroration, I betray my own life. Not for one embarrassing moment do I come out of the closet and confess that the happiest years of my life were spent trying to practice what the pope is preaching, and that in the fifteen years I stayed home with one husband and five children, I did not feel repressed, oppressed, or depressed.

It's not that I could claim in an *Apologia pro Vita Mea* that I didn't know better, that I was brainwashed by a Catholic childhood. On the contrary, by the time I was one-and-twenty, I had assimilated all the modern world's better answers. Even at twenty-five, with Thomas More and Francis of Assisi beckoning me in, the church's views on birth control kept me out. But once in, having decided to swallow the whole thing, I discovered it was a whole. Existentially, pragmatically, it all worked together, so that I came to believe (like the present pope) that capitalism and contraception are expressions of the same materialism. In my very earthy yet somehow unworldly daily life, the word of God came alive just as the old books said it would. Everything from washing dishes to making love became beautiful under God.

Of course it wasn't all sweetness and light. There were days when I could have put three of the darlings in the washer and two in the dryer. But never for a minute did I wish one of them unborn. And if I were to be convinced today that there is no God and that the church is a fraud, I would not regret those years of striving for the only goal worth the striving. Certainly I would not wish I had had more husbands, more money, or fewer children.

My time has passed; I recognize that capitalism and contraception are here to stay, and that only a fool takes God with her to the bank or the bedroom. I recognize, too, that in the providence of God all is not lost. Popes do come and go, and it may be time for the conservatives to rejoice that some bright, honest young Catholics are staying in the church and bringing up their two children to be as Catholic as they can be. Maybe it's also time for the liberals to admit a connection between the rejection of the sexual

(Continued on page 687)

Corrections: In Wayne Koestenbaum's review of *Skating with Heather Grace* by Thomas Lynch [September 11], the title was incorrectly listed as "Mother Grace."

In "Peace Plan Problems" by Linda Robinson [October 23], the penultimate sentence should read: "It may choose not to, preferring to risk being left without a policy." Our apologies.

THE EDITORS

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, Ohio 44691. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Copyright © 1987 Commonweal Foundation.

Illustrations: Cover, Huck, Rothco; Cover and pp. 658, 659, 661, 662, 663, 669, 670, 676, 678, 679, 680, Paul Valerry; p. 650, Marco De Angelis, Italy; p. 653, Bas., *Tachydromos*, Greece; p. 655, Martha Swope; pp. 664, 665, 666, 667, Rita Corbin.

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COMMONWEAL

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Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly, except monthly Christmas-New Year's and July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y. 10038. Telephone: (212) 732-0800. Single copy, $1.50. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $28; Canada, $30; foreign, $33. Special two-year rate: U.S., $49; Canada, $53; foreign, $59. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, N.Y. 10038.

Last call for Cory?

The cheering for Cory Aquino has stopped. Inertia, criticism, and rumors have set in. And violence. Those millions of Filipinos who supported Mrs. Aquino in last February's election, with 75 percent of the vote, did not take to the streets on her behalf during Col. Gregorio Honasan's surprise coup attempt last August. Nor did the Filipino army rally quickly around her. Instead, while Col. Honasan remains in hiding, supported by sympathizers, President Aquino — suffering from mixed reviews of her first two years in office — is fighting for her political survival and, with it, the survival of democracy in the Philippines.

If Aquino, still the most popular single figure in the Philippines, is to stave off the next coup attempt, she will have to take firm and fast measures (neither has been her strong suit) to restore to the extent possible that fragile coalition of military, church leaders, masses of rural poor, anti-Marcos elites, and middle-class professionals, which catapulted her to the presidency in 1986.

Since then, Aquino has built a considerable record of accomplishments: the creation of a new constitutional government, a freely elected Congress, the break-up of sugar and coconut trading monopolies, and the enhancement of labor's right to organize and strike, to name a few.

Yet all of these will be for nothing if tensions mount and the Aquino government is undermined. Despite real economic growth last year, over 5 percent, and the lowest inflation rate the country has seen for years, the Philippines is saddled with $28 billion in foreign debt and has severe unemployment rates. Wages for many unskilled laborers do not meet subsistence requirements, and land is owned by fewer than 20 percent of the farmers who till it. Overall, 60 percent of Filipinos live in poverty. The national armed forces are undersupplied and poorly trained. Moreover, they are demoralized by losses in the daily battle against New People's Army guerrillas whose numbers appear to be growing. Fifty police and military officers have also been killed this year; a cabinet minister and a left-wing politician were recently murdered; the seeds of Filipino "death squads" have been planted in the vigilante groups formed to strike back at the guerrillas; corruption at local levels is pervasive.

It is to President Aquino's credit that she would never make as good a dictator as her predecessor. Her collaborative leadership style lends itself well to democracy. Even so, she would do well to acknowledge that by abdicating executive leadership to Congress — as in her hands-off approach to this year's land reform proposal — she fueled the very charges of "weakness" and "indecisiveness" which critics now hurl against her. The much-needed effort to restore the broad-based coalition that originally backed her will require a two-pronged strategy: (1) a reinforced military effort against the Communists and (2) a broad agenda for social reform. Implement-

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ing such a strategy, while it will foster the allegience of certain segments of Filipino society, runs the unavoidable risk of alienating others.

Because the guerrilla insurgency is an expression of rural deprivation and oppression, because many of its cadres were driven into their rebellion under the Marcos dictatorship or confirmed in it by military brutality, it sometimes enjoys a degree of sympathy among critics of the Philippine status quo. These critics evade the conclusion, however, that the Philippines would be better off, economically or politically, under an NPA dictatorship than an Aquino democracy. And if democracy is going to be defended, it should be done effectively by a well-disciplined and equipped military. The likely alternative, in fact, is not semi-Maoist revolution but a military mutiny. Aquino will have to provide adequate supplies and training for the army. So far, she has looked into the treasury's empty cupboard and suggested a military pay raise. A bone, however, will not substitute for a well-planned, well- financed military policy.

But Aquino mustn't let her government's vision be limited to defeat of the Communists. Social problems are too compelling. Only speedy initiation of sweeping social reforms — not susceptible to the compromise, stalling, and fierce private resistance that marked this year's land reform fiasco — would restore confidence among the impoverished populace that their new democratic government is a better advocate for justice than the guerrillas. But social reform, too, cannot be achieved for free.

Where will the requisite money come from?

The United States must recognize the urgency of stepping up its foreign aid, despite accusations on the part of some Filipino politicians of "meddling." Representative Solarz (D-N.Y.), Senator Cranston (D-Calif.), and others are right to garner bipartisan support for more funding. Americans should recognize the penny-wise and pound-foolish character of holding back on aid. If Aquino were to fall — either to the NPA or (the more likely case) to the military, who would then be fighting the Communists — the ultimate cost and entanglement of the U.S. would be far beyond today's "generous" aid proposals.

Thirty-five million dollars was "rushed" to Manila in October. Yet, given the budget constraints facing the U.S., the battle for aid may fail or be compromised into inadequacy. We think this should be next year's most pressing foreign aid disbursement. The U.S. should enlist Japan as a second major source of financing. It should persuade the organizations involved to renegotiate the Philippines' debt. And it should make clear that it is *democracy*, not just anti-Communism, we support. Despite the U.S. message to the officers during the Honasan uprising that Washington would cut all funds to the nation if Aquino were ousted, many of these officers know well that the U.S. supported Marcos year after year precisely because of the Communist insurgents. Perhaps this is "Marcos's revenge" upon the United States. Only the most obvious and concerted effort by the U.S. to strengthen Aquino's government, by deeds as well as words, will be convincing.

THE WAGES OF STEALTH

The two-track approach to nuclear arms control being trod by the superpowers—build up and then talk, talk but build up—presently finds a mirror image in the concern of both the U.S. and the USSR for strategic arms verification while simultaneously constructing more evasive nuclear-capable submarines and nearly invisible fighter bombers.

In the U.S., development of the Stealth bomber is top-secret, top-dollar, and top-gun. The plane's official name, the Advance Technology Bomber, is harder to say than "plausible deniability," and its production costs are as well protected as the seal of confession. Like the national debt, no one knows for sure how silent and how deep this one runs, yet everyone presumes the costs will fly still higher and further.

Like the government's debt, there is also but one company developing the Stealth project—the Northrop Corporation—and accountability is sometimes sketchy. It requires a skillful reading of government appropriations requests to determine what money might be going to the project, for the ATB is never mentioned by name. In a recent interview, CIA Director William Webster estimated that Stealth technology has cost over $1 million an hour, prime rates indeed. And the *New York Times* reports that the Air Force will spend $37 billion (in low-flying 1981 dollars) on 132 of the bombers. If the planes are as evasive as the project has been to public scrutiny, they may indeed "take our breath away."

But there have been other spinoffs of the Stealth project. Northrop reported earlier this year that it was unable to account for 780 classified documents relating to the bomber program. Congressional investigators, who of course asked not to be identified, said they were particularly concerned because a Northrop employee associated with the project had been arrested in 1984 attempting to smuggle top-secret papers to Soviet agents. Since that time, sudden advances in Soviet radar techniques have forced the Air Force to search for revised ways of painting its bombers, and for developing whole new lines of radar-canceling exterior coatings.

But hope springs eternal, and scientists may yet develop technological solutions to some of our most vexing problems. At times, this hope arises undetected from the most unlikely quarters. Thus, in the early 1980s, a major U.S. product designer began a top-secret research project known as "Operation Black Hole." That project now sems to have borne fruit, and leaked reports of its success recently sent the company's stock rocketing on pre-Black Monday Wall Street. The R.J. Reynolds Co. now says that its new smokeless cigarette should be on the market in some places next year. The smoke-filled back room may have finally been relegated to the past. But as the Packard Commission reported a year after its recommendations for streamlining defense procurement had met with little progress, breaking through some other clouds is harder to do. Some smoke remains as thick and stealthy as ever.

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J. Bryan Hehir

LEADING ROLES

THE STATURE OF SCHROEDER & NUNN

The decisions of Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) and Representative Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.) not to seek the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988 caused disappointment at both ends of the party. Nunn was the choice of the "Scoop Jackson Democrats," at least on foreign policy positions. He reflected their profound skepticism about Soviet intentions, and their commitment to aid the *contras* and support spending for defense. Pat Schroeder combined a well articulated position on the left of the Democratic party with the possibility of being the first female nominee for the presidency. Both candidates evoked interest beyond the Democratic party. George Will spilled as much ink trying to persuade Nunn to run as he did trying to get Robert Bork confirmed. Schroeder attracted support from independent voters, especially among women.

While they represent very different political positions, a case can be argued that Nunn and Schroeder have made the best decision for their party and the political process in the United States by declining to run for the presidency. This case hangs on the relationship between individuals and institutions. The office of the presidency dominates the American political landscape, but it does not exhaust the political process. Both Nunn and Schroeder play well defined and important roles in the U.S. Congress. Both have established their reputations in the foreign policy arena. At times of crises the whole Congress is involved in the foreign policy debate; but relatively few members have a sustained interest and specific expertise in foreign and defense issues. Yet the history of the policy debate since World War II shows the key role the Congress can play in foreign affairs. From Senator Vandenberg's support for the Marshall Plan to Senator Fulbright's opposition to Vietnam and finally to the Iran-*contra* hearings this summer, the need for an engaged congressional role and the cost of disregarded congressional opinion is evident.

Four issues today highlight the significance of the congressional role in the foreign policy process: arms control, Central America, the Persian Gulf, and the defense budget. On all four, deep divisions exist between the White House and the Congress on how the United States should act. Nunn and Schroeder take different positions on most of these issues, but both play key roles in shaping congressional opinion.

Nunn's role is both more visible and more decisive than Schroeder's; as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the most respected voice within his party on defense issues, Nunn has the capacity to shape most issues and the ability to stop some dead in their tracks. For the most part Nunn has been a supporter of President Reagan's defense policy. But this year he has staked out two dissenting positions from the president. He opposes, root and branch, the administration's design to reinterpret the ABM Treaty, invoking a "broad interpretation" to allow extensive testing for SDI. Nunn's opposition is both substantive and procedural: he sees himself defending the original intent of the treaty and protecting the Senate's role in the foreign policy process. The potency of Nunn's role on this question is symbolized by his threat to delay ratification of an INF treaty with the Soviets until the Reagan administration agrees to a "strict interpretation" of the ABM Treaty. An INF treaty without Nunn's support means a major ratification fight in the Senate with a very uncertain outcome.

Equally explosive is Nunn's opposition to the tactic of reflagging Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf. Nunn can scarcely be accused of being reticent about projecting U.S. power, but he has doubts about the short-term utility and long-term wisdom of the administration's decision to reflag. While several senators share Nunn's concerns, his voice and his stature give this challenge unique weight.

Schroeder has neither a committee chairmanship nor the same breadth of support within the Democratic party for her views. But her tenure on the House Armed Services Committee and her willingness to address in detail the budgeting, strategic, and political implications of defense policy have guaranteed her a platform within the Democratic party and the Congress. On *contra* aid and defense spending she is to the left of Nunn, but in the House she speaks for and with others. Often she stakes out a position ahead of her colleagues, and usually more liberal than the Democratic consensus. Unlike Nunn, she cannot by herself be decisive on an issue. She can, however, influence the direction of Democratic debate on defense and foreign policy questions.

The significance of Nunn and Schroeder remaining in the Congress should not be equated with a specific issue or where they stand on it. Their value lies in providing the Congress with a capability it needs. Congress is inherently in a reactive position on foreign policy issues. The Constitution gives the president the clear initiative on foreign and defense policy. Congressional reaction is limited to debate and decisions about appropriations. The first is an intellectual and moral influence; the second can be coercive, but all acknowledge it as an imprecise instrument. The personal proclivity of members often reinforces

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the secondary role of Congress in foreign policy. Few people get elected to Congress on a foreign policy agenda and even fewer on the basis of foreign policy expertise.

Precisely because congressional capabilities are reactive and often sporadic in nature, there needs to be in both houses a core of people who can provide coherence and direction to a long-term, sophisticated congressional interest in the foreign policy process. In the aftermath of the Iran-*contra* hearings, defenders of the executive branch complained of a congressional desire to "micro-manage" foreign policy. The objection misses a fundamental fact: from Vietnam to Lebanon to Nicaragua the record illustrates that "micro" decisions have macro-implications. The ability to select those key choices which are systemic in their implications and to engage the Congress vigorously in these questions requires some members who by position in the House and Senate, as well as by inclination and training, are willing to act as the custodians of the congressional role in foreign policy.

Supporters of both Nunn and Schroeder have emphasized their presidential qualities. We shouldn't, however, let the presidency dominate our idea of what is useful, indeed essential, public service. Some consideration should be given to the already demonstrated talent individuals like Nunn and Schroeder have for providing legislative wisdom and decisive leadership in their present roles.

'The Same Old Assassins'

Can something resembling normal politics be substituted for the violent clash of arms? That is the aim of the Arias plan in Central America. But the transition is daunting. In Nicaragua police broke up opposition demonstrations on the weekend after the Arias accords were signed and arrested the human-rights activist Lino Hernández. Hernández was sentenced to thirty days for "disturbing the peace." After being the object of international protest, he was released on September 9. Opposition rallies have been tolerated more recently, although restrictions on the media remain.

In El Salvador, "space" for opposition political activities, previously limited to the right, has haltingly increased during the last year for the left as well. But the deliberately brazen slaying of the Salvadoran human-rights activist Herbert Anaya on October 26 should remind the U.S. that questions about democracy cannot be limited to Nicaragua. The October 28 issue of *Proceso*, a weekly publication of the Jesuits' University of Central America, published "The Same Old Assassins, an editorial *cri de coeur*, which, somewhat abridged, follows.

THE EDITORS

They have murdered Herbert Anaya, the president of the nongovernmental human rights commission. Who killed him? The same old assassins: the ones who murdered Archbishop Romero and the ten other priests; the ones who murdered the leaders of the Democratic Revolutionary Front; the ones who murdered hundreds of teachers, union members, and members of cooperatives; the ones who murdered thousands of peasants. The same old assassins.

But hadn't we been told that human rights are respected now in El Salvador? . . . Haven't they been saying that the political wing of the opposition forces could now return to the country and function, and thus show the military wing that armed struggle is no longer necessary?

But no. True, fewer people are being murdered now. And, true, there is more public protest against those who are mainly responsible for the problems we are suffering. But it seems . . . that the death squads have not been disarmed, and that their members—these "heavily armed men in civilian clothes"—continue to walk among us. . . .

The killings . . . have continued and will continue precisely because this government has failed . . . to seek out and prosecute those who made the killing of defenseless civilians a way of making money and showing patriotism.

What does it matter that Anaya was able to denounce, on television, the lies that human rights are now respected in El Salvador? What does it matter since, days later, he was murdered for expressing those views? . . . Is that freedom of the press? Is that freedom of expression? Or the trap of a "democracy" which has no real strength or foundation? . . .

The shadow which already hovers over Colombia is now beginning to hover over El Salvador: a guerrilla force is invited to lay down its arms and enter politics; once it does so, and thus is defenseless, it is then slaughtered by the armed forces with impunity. . . .

There's no use discussing what the Duarte government would like to do . . . because wishing for something is different from actually being able to do it. The government and the security forces and the judiciary here cannot guarantee anything, for the simple reason that, when it comes to punishing political crimes, their power is minimal.

This time they won't come at us with the argument they used when Archbishop Romero was murdered, that the left had done the killing in order to exacerbate tensions . . . No, more than sixty thousand murders have taught us. . . . which group the assassins belong to and which group contains the next candidates for martyrdom. All the claims President Duarte made during his just concluded trip abroad now stand annulled by this murder of one brave and modest defender of human rights. The only prescient statement the president could have made would have been an admission of how terribly impotent he is.

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DEVELOPMENT UNDER SIEGE

A PLEA FOR COMMON SENSE

SUDHIR SEN

The veteran AFL-CIO president George Meany who was known for his sharp tongue and robust common sense, once made a biting remark that comes haunting across the years: "Economics is the only profession in which it is possible to achieve great eminence without ever being right." The Committee for Development Planning of the United Nations which consists of twenty-four eminent economists handpicked by the Secretary General from as many countries, has delivered a resounding proof of the melancholy truth embodied in George Meany's words.

The Committee was established in 1966 by the Economic and Social Council. Its declared task was to assess world development trends and prospects and to make concrete recommendations to promote development and economic cooperation among nations. It was deliberately set up as an *independent body*, outside the bureaucratic apparatus of both the U.N. and national administrations. Each member is appointed for a term of three years and serves in a *personal capacity*, uninhibited by any official direction — explicit or implicit — from his or her national government. The underlying assumption was that such a galaxy of economists would provide the needed light and guidance for development to proceed apace along the right track.

That hope has been sadly belied. The members of the committee, with very few exceptions, have been long on theories and short on practical experience. Besides, they have often differed on fundamentals, yet their views have been juxtaposed, not reconciled. No wonder that the jargon-laden reports they have been turning out with abstract and mostly opaque recommendations, have so far produced more confusion than light. Their very erudition, it seems, has served as blinders. All too often they have proved unable to see the obvious and have therefore missed the axioms of development. The result is that with great authority they have built inappropriate models of development on shaky premises.

Development under Siege, the recently-released report on the Committee's latest session held in New York last April, well illustrates these ingrained deficiencies. On the whole it ably depicts the multiple malaise that afflicts the world economy today and has, for several years, kept development under siege. But when it comes to the all-important question of how to break this unholy siege and infuse new life into development, it speaks in discordant, even contradictory, voices and falls back upon platitudinous generalities.

The world economy in 1987 shows "alarming signs" of strain and stress," says the report, stemming from huge imbalances in trade flows and international payments, severe maladjustment in exchange rates, conflicts over trade policies, a debilitating debt burden that has placed many countries of Latin America and Africa in "extreme predicaments," and real commodity prices which are still lingering at their lowest levels in many decades. Meanwhile, economic growth in Europe and North America has remained sluggish, with unemployment persisting at abnormally high levels.

There have, of course, been some positive developments as well: Attempts by the major economic powers to "harmonize" their economic policies; vigorous technological growth; subduing inflation, "albeit at high cost"; remarkable progress made by many Asian economies, even at a time of slow growth in international trade; basic rethinking about economic systems; and important reforms already instituted. All in all, the present situation is marked by "both constraints and opportunities." The task, therefore, is to reinforce the promising trends and to defuse the danger points.

The world economy, though visibly in disarray, is nonetheless growing. But the report noted, flows of trade and capital are marked by "great and anomalous imbalances," and financial and monetary instability point to considerable downside risk. The biggest adjustments still lie ahead, and the major industrial economies have yet to redress their own imbalances and help reduce the debt overhang to manageable proportions. The adjustments, the Committee warns, will not be orderly

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and controlled, but "disruptive and costly" unless cooperation is greatly strengthened.

Of course the Committee goes into much more detail. It notes the uneven experiences of different countries and regions. It depicts the far-from-exhilarating prospects for growth between now and the year 2000. It worries over the implications of low growth in the industrial nations as well as the withdrawal of capital from developing nations by commercial banks and the unprecedented gobbling up of the world's savings by a debtor U.S.

How to restore greater equilibrium in a world economy so visibly out of joint? Unfortunately, the Committee's principal recommendations constitute little more than a formidable wish list: governments must harmonize their macro-economic policies; the Japanese capital surplus should be used for world development; new financial resources and relief from the debt problem must be found for the developing countries, etc., etc. Far from devising an effective strategy to lift the present siege on development, the Committee has itself been besieged by facile assumptions, has surrendered to wordy and evasive recipes, and has glossed over the inevitable disagreements.

These disagreements are in fact fundamental. What options do developing countries have in today's "harsh external climate"? They are assumed to be three: reliance on export-led growth; expansion of "South-South" trade; and an inward-looking approach tapping the potential of domestic markets and resources. On the first, the Committee candidly admits it can offer "no unequivocal view." As for promoting trade among developing countries, though this remains a limited option for the longer term, past schemes have booked little success. And the Committee, while agreeing that autarchy is defeatist, again divides over less drastic inward-looking development approaches.

After this general discourse the Committee takes cogni-

From long march to great leap

Last summer Mr. Sudhir Sen sent *Commonweal* a manuscript arguing that Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping was "the greatest development economist of our time," and that the recent reforms in rural China represented a milestone of practically world-historical dimensions. The editors, in returning the manuscript, expressed the opinion that "educated U.S. audiences have been periodically exposed to strong doses of enthusiasm for this or that recent development in China" and that consequently we approached announcements of "breakthroughs in China" with a good deal of wariness, particularly in view of the difficulties of evaluating information, the possibilities of policy reversals, and the dangers of discussing economic questions apart from questions of political and human rights. Our observations drew from Mr. Sen a kind of capsule statement not only on the reforms in China but on the larger framework of recent economic development history. With his kind permission, we print sections of his provocative reply.

THE EDITORS

Many thanks for your letter of 30 July 1987. I am particularly grateful for your frank comments. . . . The article does look, at least prima facie, "too enthusiastic," and according to the normal standards of journalism, it should have been tempered by a healthy dose of skepticism. Yet I must confess that I have long passed the stage where I could in my writing yield to an uncritical impulse. What I actually did in this case was something quite different, and unusual; I indulged in some daring crystal-gazing into the future. And in today's dreary climate of pervasive despair I found one truly exciting source of hope: the developments in rural China. Let me briefly explain why.

In my judgment Stalin's collectivization of farming stands out as a blunder of Himalayan dimensions in the economic history of humankind. It inflicted enormous suffering and set the clock of human progress back not only in Soviet Russia, but in all other countries which followed this false ideological beacon, and that included China. It was, however, always my deep-rooted conviction that the genes of pragmatism embedded in the Chinese people over thousands of years could not assimilate such a "foreign" element and were bound to reject it sooner or later. Deng Xiaoping had the courage and foresight to end this perversity. With his so-called "responsibility system" he has planted a vast army of smallholders, though on a de facto basis, and has thereby unleashed the energies of eight hundred million Chinese. This is a truly monumental achievement far greater than the emancipation of serfs.

Will the present system be reversed, pushing China back to the "commune"? My own crystal says, "Never." This may sound dogmatic, yet my reasoning is quite simple. The human capacity for folly, though high, is not unlimited. The race does not always learn from experience, but sometimes it does; there are some follies which are so costly and so devastating in their impact that it will instinctively avoid an encore. Collectivized or communized farming belongs to this category. In a case like this, once is enough.

Not only that, China's example will act like a contagion and will, sooner or later, spur others to move in the same direction. How refreshing it is to hear Gorbachev talk about family farming! Here again my study of Russia had

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zance, though rather grudgingly, of the obvious fact that the development budgets, for the most part, consist of *domestic* resources while, by contrast, external resources generally comprise only a small fraction of these budgets. It is curious that the Committee, after a long detour, arrives willy-nilly at what is the heart of the development problem, but refuses to face its implications squarely, shunned all specifics, and drifted back into some pious platitudes, such as: the importance of human resource development and "human capital accumulation"; domestic resource mobilization; scrutiny of public sector policies to eliminate excessive bureaucratic regulations and to stimulate initiative and self-help; reordering public expenditures with greater emphasis on national development and less on defense spending; readjustment of intrasectoral priorities (e.g., provision of primary health services versus building costly urban hospitals).

This is a familiar recipe which has been repeated many times in different forms and forums, but which has so far yielded little tangible result. Will it do any better in a climate of constraint? And if it does, how much difference will it really make? The benefits can be no more than marginal. For the fact is that the Committee has consistently failed to address the fundamentals of the problem of development. Instead, it has elaborately dealt with what are secondary or tertiary issues, if not symptoms of the root causes of underdevelopment. It is like discussing at length the patterns of home decoration while ignoring the foundation on which the house is to be erected.

Suppose, by some miracle, common sense suddenly broke out in the Committee's deliberations, enabling it to make a clean sweep of the tortured and mostly misplaced premises with which it has been working all these years. Suppose that it would strike out on a radically different course, recognize half-a-dozen diverse axioms of development and, utilizing them as a foundation on which to build a strategy

long convinced me that some day she would have to undo the damage done by Stalin and de-collectivize her farming. What we are witnessing in Gorbachev's Russia is the cautious beginning of this historic denouement. There is little doubt that the forces set in motion by Deng Xiaoping in rural China are hastening this process.

In the developing countries the most formidable obstacle to economic progress is the still-lingering feudalism. And the most important single task before them is to extinguish it and to plant in its place an army of landowning family farmers, often as small-holders, as was done in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan immediately after the last world war. Again, the example set by China on a spectacular scale of the benefits that flow from a system of even de facto family farmers should impel others to move in the same direction. We can, if we so wish, no doubt accelerate this process with an exercise of some foresight.

It is true that China's recent history has been too erratic — with abrupt gear shifts and U-turns. And this has made people both cautious and skeptical in appraising trends and events in China. There will certainly be policy swings also in the future — it is not easy for a nation to wean itself from ideologies it has been nourished on for decades under a draconic leadership. Yet, this time there is one big difference. For reasons mentioned above, there can be no going back on the responsibility system; if anything, it can only be further consolidated with time. This means that rural China now on the march will continue to forge ahead. The eight hundred million liberated Chinese who have tasted rising prosperity will increasingly make an impact on the entire system of government and will help liberalize it in due course.

As for human rights, I fully agree that China leaves much to be desired; only recently we saw a rude setback in this field. Yet I see solid reasons for hope here as well. That hope is based precisely on the progress that has been, and is being, made on the economic front — in endowing people with food, jobs, income, and shelter, also with education and health services. All in all, their economic elbowroom has greatly widened.

In talking about human rights, only too often we are apt to forget that this is a two-dimensional concept; that its economic contents are no less critical than the political; that quite often the former can pave the way — and lend solid meaning — to the latter. Today we are prone to equate democracy with voting rights, even though we know from past experience that ballots in the hands of foodless, jobless, illiterate people are little more than scraps of paper. We forget that the Western democracies took generations to reach the stage of universal adult franchise — in England it was a long stretch of ninety-five years, from 1832 to 1927. Yet in the poverty-stricken developing nations we try to reach that peak in one big leap!

In my own mind China is now well set on a long march towards Jeffersonian democracy based on small farms and small business enterprises. Starting two hundred years later, saddled with over a billion people, and painfully emerging from an ideological straitjacket, she must of course travel a different route, far more arduous and tortuous, to reach the same destination . . . A great deal of deliberation and careful evaluation of historical trends has led me to the conclusion that Deng Xiaoping's China marks a watershed in the history of human development, that he himself is destined to go down in history as a dynamic leader who set eight hundred million rural Chinese free from the stifling grip of an irrational ideology.

SUDHIR SEN

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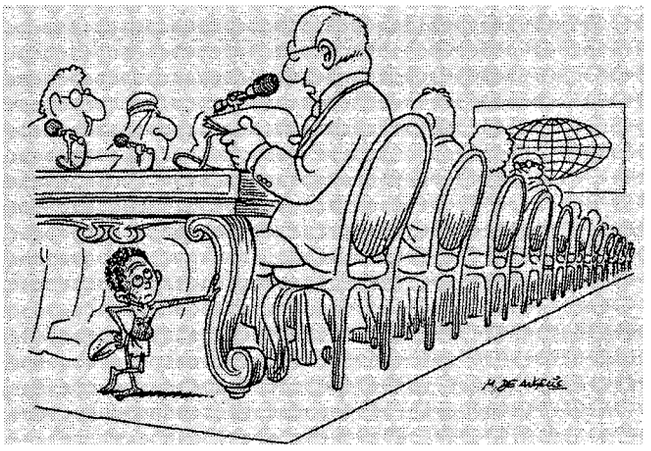

worthy of the name, at long last liberate the developing nations by the shortest and quickest route from their present moribund and primitive economies to fast-growing, dynamic economies befitting the modern scientific age. What, then? And what might such axioms be? Briefly, they are as follows:

1. The developing countries are poor in terms of GNP and per-capita income, but they are rich in physical resources: land, water, minerals, forest, profuse sunshine, and abundant manpower. This is their real capital, the source of their hope for a bright economic future. The heart of the development problem is to activate their vast, but unused and underused resources with the amazing tools of modern science and technology to create wealth, jobs, and income at an optimum rate.

2. By far the most important resources they possess are land and water (barring of course a few oil-rich desert countries). The potential of these resources for wealth, jobs, and income-creation can, in most cases, be tapped with little or no aid from outside, and without having to endure a long waiting period. Moreover, since food is by far the most important basic need of human beings, and since it looms so large in the family budgets of people in the developing countries, their living standards will take a quantum leap as soon as they are provided with enough food.

3. To exploit the full potential of the land-and-water resources and to maximize food production, two inescapable imperatives must be satisfied. The developing countries must abolish the still lingering feudal system and establish in its place an army of small-holders tending their own farms mostly with family labor. Science-based, input-intensive modern agriculture can never flourish in an agrarian environment crowded with tenant farmers and sharecroppers dominated by landlords.

The other imperative is to build all-weather roads, ending the spatial isolation of villages and linking them to readily-accessible market towns. Modern agriculture will, albeit, need a lot of other things as well, such as irrigation, improved seeds, fertilizer, plant protection materials, warehouses, transport, communication, power, and, in due course, an extension service built with trained experts. But the fact is: once the two imperatives are satisfied, agriculture will be set on the march, and everything else will tend to fall in place more or less automatically, often as a result of grass-roots movements sprouting in the countryside.

4. The developing countries are burdened with huge, and still-soaring populations. Unemployment has been mounting. The result is a staggering waste of manpower. It is high time to realize that the millions of man-hours now wasted are equivalent to billions of dollars. They should be systematically mobilized and put to productive work, especially well-conceived, quick-maturing public works projects relating to agriculture.

5. Apart from food, there are four other basic needs which must be given the highest priority in any rational program for development. They are jobs, shelter, health services, education. In a sense, the first two are directly related to food. For agriculture restructured on the lines indicated above will help maximize not only food production, but also job creation. The army of small-holders will work like bees on their farms to produce more and to earn more, knowing full well that they will reap the benefit of what they produce with the sweat of their brow. The multiplier effects of increased food production will spill over in many directions — transportation, communication, processing, distribution, as well as rising demand for farm labor, inputs, tools and equipment — leading to a widening circle of new job opportunities.

Once small-holders are assured of their title to land, one of the first things they will do is to build homes for themselves, even if on a modest scale, often using their own labor as far as possible. Homesteading will suddenly blossom, triggering a boom in the housing industry which, again, will create millions of new jobs.

The need for controlling epidemics, providing safe drinking water, and making primary health services available to the masses of people is obvious and hardly needs any comment. The World Health Organization launched a program a few years back under the motto "Health for All by the Year 2000." The emphasis is appropriate. The task now is to ensure that the slogan is turned into a reality.

Similarly, the need for education is too obvious to call for any comment. The minimal goal here must be to stamp out illiteracy to provide at least primary education on a nation-wide scale and to build, step by step, on its foundation, a full-fledged modern system of education.

6. And finally, there must be an effective family planning program in every developing country to brake the runaway growth of population. Despite the progress recently made in this field, the food-population-poverty race still looks desperate for most developing countries. It can be decisively won and the masses of people finally freed from the grip of hunger and poverty only when their rate of population growth is reduced drastically, their economic growth boosted significantly, and the benefits are spread widely among the people. Moreover, family planning will be really effective only when it is combined with vigorous efforts on the fronts mentioned above, that is, to provide food, jobs, shelter, education, and health services.

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All this may sound like a tall order. Yet it is not only feasible, but also inescapable if these countries are to solve their poverty and hunger; this is, in fact, the route Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have already traveled. And today, before our very eyes, China is giving a spectacular demonstration of the effectiveness of this strategy. Rural China is now on the march with its 800 million people. Their income is rising at a fast rate, doubling every five or six years. Developing nations in general can and should learn from today's China. They can, if they so wish, repeat on their own soil the economic miracle that is taking place in rural China. Ideological differences should be no reason to turn a blind eye to these heartening developments.

What about industrial development which is so dear to the economic planners of the third-world countries? Should it be sacrificed at the altar of a food-first, or agri-centered, approach to development as outlined above? Many experts, both in developed and developing nations, are still inclined to regard such an approach as too simplistic, too one-sided to meet the multifarious needs of a modern economy. Such reactions are hasty and superficial. They are a symptom of the pervasive fact that development problems are seldom sufficiently thought through or subjected to deep X-rays. These axioms have some vital corollaries which are only too often overlooked.

● *First*, the agri-centred approach as adumbrated here, far from holding back industrial development, represents the surest, quickest, and most efficient road to it. It will inevitably spawn a wide range of manufacturing, processing, and service industries which will both support and be supported by rising farm productivity. The housing industry will add to them a whole new dimension with building and building materials industries across the countryside. The stage will then be set for a variety of consumer goods and related industries which can be supplemented, in due course, by basic industries where conditions are favorable for their establishment.

This is the strategy the developing countries must follow to achieve rapid growth at a minimum cost. Mobilization of internal resources and intensive cultivation of the home markets must be given priority over everything else. From domestic market development to export markets — this is the route they must travel, and not the other way round.

Incidentally, Hong Kong and Singapore are atypical; they are a kind of port-city-states, and so trade remains their lifeblood. Similarly, single-resource states like Libya and Kuwait must rely on exports of crude oil for their very existence. These are, however, exceptions which only prove the general rule.

● *Second*, if talks of export-led development are a costly and time-consuming digression, so too is the general thesis of import substitution. Recent history is littered with the wreckage of industries which were set up more or less mindlessly in pursuit of this goal. They came to grief primarily because little heed was paid to cost-benefit calculations and the extent of the market available for their products. Given this dreary record, few would today dare opt for an encore of such an ill-conceived non-strategy.

● And *third*, today it is not just third-world development which is under siege, but also the industrial nations with intense, almost cut-throat, competition among themselves for market shares. It is this scenario that spells sluggish growth for them in the coming years. And from this the CDP has drawn its pessimistic conclusion about the prospects of the developing countries. In doing so, it has, even if implicitly, voted for the trickle-down theory and has, whether inadvertently or not, made third-world development hostage to the growth rate of the industrial nations.

This is the worst flaw in its analysis, as it is of so many other experts and agencies. Instead of being at the mercy of growth in the industrial nations, the developing countries can bring new hope for the world economy and infuse a new life into it. If they are provided reasonable respite from the suffocating burden of their external debt, and if their productive forces are unleashed along the lines indicated above, their growth rate will soar, their markets will expand, and in turn provide strong underpinnings to the prosperity of the industrial nations and help boost their growth rates to significantly higher levels.

Hitherto the cry has been what the developed nations, the "industrial North," can do for the developing nations, the "poor South." This is like viewing the problem from the wrong end of the telescope. It is time to turn it around and focus it on the powerful engine of growth that lies dormant in the sprawling third world, time to rebuild its limping economies with a strategy of self-generating internal growth so that they may, in turn, help redress the mounting imbalances of the industrial world. Today's hostages can become tomorrow's liberators.

War, it has been said, is too important to be left to generals. Economic development, we have now learnt from bitter experience, is too important to be left to economists, especially to macro-economic theoreticians. Just as generals are proverbially busy "fighting the last war," economists mechanically tend to deploy past experience to solve today's problems when the very nature of the problems has undergone a sea change.

This is exemplified, above all, by their attitude towards agriculture. In most developing countries agriculture has amazing potential — for producing wealth, creating jobs, building industries, boosting incomes, and spurring GNP growth. In today's developing world, agriculture is destined to serve as the engine of economic progress. Yet, amazingly few economists are able to grasp this simple, overriding fact.

This failure, in the final analysis, must be attributed to a historical factor. For a century or more economic thinking has been overwhelmingly dominated by two classical names giving rise to two generally opposing schools of thought: David Ricardo and Karl Marx. The most curious fact is that, even in their own time, both grossly misjudged the nature and role of agriculture. Meanwhile, agriculture itself has been rev-

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olutionized because of the miracles wrought by science and technology, particularly in chemistry, biology, and genetical engineering; and this has shattered the old ideas about adaptability of crops, soil fertility and land productivity, the economies of scale, and the law of diminishing returns. Yet economists, in general, have not been able to jettison their old concepts and reorient their theories to fit the vastly altered realities of today. Their thought-world, surprisingly enough, with all the dazzling tools of scientific analysis at their disposal, continues to be dominated by the ghosts of Ricardo and Marx.

No wonder, then, that the Committee for Development Planning, with all its eminence and all its labor, spread over twenty years, has made so little contribution to the cause it was established to serve. The lamentation over "development under siege" which fills its latest report, cannot but evoke mixed feelings. For today's woes are, at bottom, only a symptom, the inevitable outcome of a much more deeply rooted malaise. For a generation or more, development economics itself has been under siege, mindlessly set up with inappropriate theories which, like some holy mantras, are solemnly intoned year after year by the high priests of development. This intellectual siege is all the more sinister because it is self-imposed, carries an aura of high authority, and is lethal in its impact. Until it is lifted, and a new vision with a sound strategy emerges in its place, there can be no real hope for development.

Bismarck once remarked: "*Vierzig Professoren, Vaterland verloren!*" (Forty professors, and the fatherland is lost!) Must it be left to the United Nations to prove: Twenty-four eminent economists, and development becomes a casualty? It is past the time to end this egregious anomaly.

ETHIOPIAN LANDSCAPES

THE POLITICS OF WATERING A DESERT

DOUGLAS STEVENS

The doors of the airplane swing open to the familiar smells of Addis Ababa: urine, spice, and eucalyptus smoke. I take a deep breath, and am happy. I am in Ethiopia to look at a group of watershed management projects. One reason the country is so vulnerable to famine is that topsoils are everywhere washing away. When the rains don't come, or when they come too fast, the thin soils cannot hold the crops. To repair the damage, foreign donors give people food as payment to plant trees, to build bunds and hillside terraces — anything that will renew and stabilize the soil.

You've got to be impressed by how much these projects have gotten done: everyone says that. Mile after mile, there are woodlots, bunds, regenerated hillsides. When you look closely, you see the flaws — bunds broken, great gaps where the trees have died — but how very much work has visibly gone into it. It makes me think of technologies like the space shuttle — look what we can do! — but what can we expect to come of it?

We are driving to Dessie, in the heart of Welo. This is the region where the BBC took all those films of starving children in 1984. There was a phenomenon in Welo then called "closing the house:" families would tidy up their affairs, sit down together, and die. Now, hillsides are green. Patches of rich, freshly-plowed earth alternate with patches of crops ready for harvest after the short rains. In some places, people didn't even bother to plant their short-rains crops, preferring to catch up on marriages and memorial services instead. They will regret this, since the big rains are about to fall again; but nobody knows that yet.

Halfway to Dessie, the road winds down off the high central plateau in order to move north through the Rift Valley. Just before, at Tarma-ber, the road swings out to the very lip of the plateau. Eagles hang motionless in midair here, resting on the winds sweeping up the mountain's face. Beneath them, through a great cut in the mountainside, you look at the valley far below. When I was here many years ago, I was struck by the beauty of that valley: it was as if God had flung down a great handful of mud houses and gardens and people, scattering them across the Rift. There was disorder there, and complete harmony. Now, everyone has been "villagized" by central decree, and the houses are lined up in rows like military barracks. The disorder is gone, and so is the harmony.

There is a rationale for this. If people are gathered from scattered farms and grouped in villages, the government can more easily give them drinking water, schools, clinics — or so goes the theory. But grouping farmers (at their own expense) has proved easier than providing them with services (which

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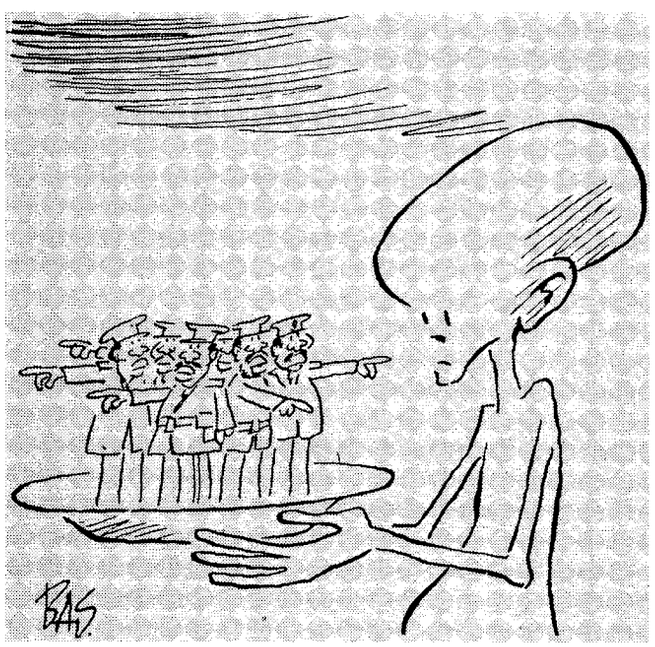
often never come). Villages are choked with dust in the dry season and mud in the wet, and epidemics sweep freely through the crowds. Some people like the result anyway, especially the young, who enjoy the villages' open social life. Others are less happy, finding themselves jammed together with people they don't like, far from their fields and grazing lands. But villagization is a blunt instrument; when it strikes, *everybody* moves, the happy and the sad.

This is no small upheaval. The Ethiopian Airlines calendar for 1987 has sketches and descriptions of traditional houses from various parts of the country. (March: "The Oromo people live in round houses built of locally available materials — wood or bamboo — and are thatched.") I am told the calendar will become a collector's item. Given the pace of villagization, there soon won't *be* any traditional housing in Ethiopia. Can a change this fundamental really be sustained?

I wonder the same about these vast projects we are seeing. At one point, I am at the end of a bridge on the Gonder road, looking at the terraced hillside opposite. There was a bridge and a hillside like this where I worked once in Nepal, and I can't help comparing the views. In Nepal, the terracing was of an almost erotic beauty, a perfect fusion of man and mountainside. It came from centuries of rubbing away at the hills, until their most intimate contours were wholly known. In Ethiopia, the marriage of people and hillside seems arranged and awkward; how much of this work will endure?

We stay at the Ambessel Hotel, Dessie's best. When the man upstairs flushes his toilet, a sampling leaks out of the pipes onto the toilet seat below. When he takes a shower, the water pours through the floor. The restaurant menu features "PIN APPLE BROKEN SLICE," though there isn't any this week. When the lights fail in the bar, pocket flashlights flick on all around; people have stayed here before. The bill for six days is $51, and the place is just about worth it. . . .



We are meeting with a group of farmers and local officials. We sit on benches, they sit on the ground. We are in our bush-travel gear, they wear patched pants and shirts — the kinds of things that come in bales from church groups overseas. I ask questions through an interpreter, and then watch the long discussions that follow. Not understanding the language, I see only complex rhythms and tones of expression. Some people are bored now, some alert. Suddenly, the faces all set stonily in opposition to a line of questioning. A new thought, and the expressions shift, falling into dissonant clusters along lines of disagreement. It is like an orchestra, which I am conducting through my questions. Do I really have a good enough ear to be playing this role?

In every such discussion with farmers, there emerge three lines of thought: the negative and discouraged view (with its implicit appeal for help); the "correct" line (tuned carefully to what the visitors want to hear); and the unexpected act of imagination. In the last category, I think of the man who told us how use of the local hillsides has been changing. Before the 1974 Revolution (he explained), only the ten or fifteen most powerful people could take grass and wood from the hillsides, so the foliage constantly renewed itself. After the Revolution, nearby villagers invaded the hillsides, which were then stripped bare. Now, there is need for new ways of controlling access, so the hillsides will provide something for everyone. So simple and direct. I wish we could make him project manager.

Simplicity is the exception. Every piece of information we have heard on this trip has, within twenty-four hours, been directly contradicted by some other piece of information. Work plans for each area are developed through consultation with local peasants; work plans are arbitrarily handed down by bureaucrats in Addis Ababa. Hillside closures sharply reduce the farmers' access to fodder; closures sharply increase access to fodder. Most of the trees live; most of the trees die. Farmers voluntarily maintain their soil bunds; farmers are so dependent on food aid that they maintain bunds only when paid.

It is the peril of leaving the office and confronting the real world. Back at headquarters, thoughts about development are clear and consistent. Here in the field, the *facts* of development are often obscure and capricious. Between these modes of experience is a chasm so vast as to be almost unbridgeable. How can bureaucrat and farmer ever hope to touch?

People used to make fun of the emperor for the high-flown poetry of his titles: King of Kings, Defender of the Faith, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Now the poetry has been swept away by a revolutionary leader: Comrade Mengistu Haile-Mariam, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, and Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. Such crushing, dead weight in language like this.

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It can be a hard place, this new People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. For example, practically anyone can throw you in jail: police, army, your neighborhood council. No conversation goes long without reference to this. "Just when we get our storekeepers trained, they get sent off to jail." "He was running the zonal office until he went to jail." "He's out of jail now and back on the job." Nobody seems to expect reasons. One person I met spent four years in prison for what his discharge papers called "suspicion of associating with a certain organization."

These are the lucky ones, since there have been periods when practically anyone might simply kill you. A woman I talk to is worrying about her daughter in the U.S.: "She is now my oldest child, since the government shot my son." Not many people here are without stories like these.

It leads to a sense of defeat, a corruption of spirit. Friends speak of their grown-up sons, bachelors at what by olden standards is an indecent age: "Today's youth don't like to marry; they like to spend their money to entertain themselves, drinking and smoking and going with women." In Addis Ababa, people talk ironically about the pursuit of the "3 Vs" — Videos, Volvos, and Villas. It is a game played with indecent success by Party members, government officials, merchants, whoever has access to the pie. Whatever the sins of the *ancien régime*, it is difficult to muster much affection for the "revolutionaries" who have followed. . . .

We are traveling again. Images: A baby donkey lies dead in the road, looking so very surprised and disappointed.

Rule of Thumb (as expressed by a government official): "When you're using food as a payment to get work done, the most cooperative peasant is a hungry peasant." So these projects thrive on famine, and lose momentum when the harvest is good. Isn't there something wrong here?

The food is the carrot; there are also many sticks. We speak to a forester, who tells us how he shifts families and villages around to make room for his fuelwood plantations. (You there, you move off this hillside; you there, move out of the area. . . .) When he goes for a stroll amongst his trees, he takes bodyguards along to avoid embarrassment. We have heard similar stories from soil conservation officers who close off grazing lands to let them regenerate. (You move your animals off the hillside; you move yours out of the area. . . .) In one respect at least, the Ethiopian Revolution has been a democratizing force: there are now many more people than before with the power to push other people around.

Still, working here forces you to think in new ways about coercion. For example, a group of villagers is told by the government to keep its animals off traditional grazing areas on nearby hillsides. In a year or two, the foliage has grown back and the hillsides stop washing into the valley. Slopes once bare are covered with grasses that can be cut and carried to the livestock.

"This is very good," says the leader of the local Peasants' Association, "but it works only because the Ministry of Agriculture tells us what to do. If the hillsides were given to us to control, the animals would be back the next day and the ground would be bare in a week."

The sense of helplessness and dependency has deep roots in Ethiopian social history. (Party and government have simply assumed the coercive role of the pre-revolutionary landlord.) In the absence of village solidarity and initiative, what is the correct role for the government to play? It is nasty to force people to close their hillsides; it is nasty to leave the hillsides open and watch them wash away. I'm glad I'm not the one who has to decide what to do.

More and more these projects seem to me a metaphor for how things are in socialist Ethiopia. You can draw conclusions in alternative ways, depending on who you are:

POLLYANNA: Over ten years, the projects have treated vast areas of Ethiopia with conservation works or planted them in trees. Even if this has been (say) only two-thirds effective, many thousands of people have benefited. Everywhere you go in the project areas, people tell stories of eroding hillsides that have been stabilized, once-dry springs that now flow again, improved soil fertility, reduced flooding, double- or triple-cropping on newly-irrigated land. In the course of all this work, fundamental issues are being confronted: how to manage woodlots for sustained yield of the products people most need, how to control access to communal resources. It is a vital learning process for both farmers and government officials. Little by little, new conservation practices are becoming ingrained in local culture, and land is being reborn.

CASSANDRA: Over ten years, these projects have treated only 2.5 percent of the land originally defined as "highly eroded." Much of this work (say, one-third) has failed to last. At the same time, new areas are constantly becoming "highly eroded." At best, therefore, things are standing still. Even these results depend on a great deal of coercion, leaving farmers poised between gratitude for progress made and resentment at being pushed around. And the hard work is yet to come: most of the roadside areas (where food payments can easily be made) have now been treated, leaving much less accessible areas (which often have the most severe erosion) for the projects' next phases. Increasingly, the projects may consist of scattered pockets of social stress (where conservation works are underway), surrounded by great areas where degradation of the land proceeds unchecked.

All these observations are accurate, I think, and they reflect Ethiopia's troubled state: some people are better off; some people are worse off; many people are unaffected; the situation is deteriorating. What do you do with information like this?

We are driving back to Addis Ababa. Images: Rounding a curve, we burst upon a herd boy and his flock of sheep. In an instant, he has scooped the smallest lamb into his arms and leaped for the roadside. It is an act of instinctive love: I know my sheep, and my sheep know me. Let me finally remember that of Ethiopia.

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SCREEN

FILMING DANGEROUSLY

ATTENBOROUGH'S 'CRY FREEDOM'

Cry Freedom is noble, well-intentioned, and flat. Producer/director Sir Richard Attenborough, maker of *Gandhi*, here applies his epic techniques to a new and similarly sympathetic subject, South African activist Steven Biko, or, more precisely, his relationship with Johannesburg journalist Donald Woods.

The problem isn't the subject; indeed, some of Biko's strength of character and the genuine threat he posed to apartheid shine through this film. But Attenborough's penchant for overstatement makes Biko too saintly, too much of a good thing; moreover, the film's double focus and confusing editing mar dramatic development. I have no argument with Attenborough's politics, and I hope that this film embarrasses South Africa, if on no other count than its startling record of people committing suicide while in police custody. But *Cry Freedom* is not simply a political film with heart and soul; it's a Big Important Political Film, and collapses under its own weight.

Denzel Washington (from *A Soldier's Story*) plays Biko; Kevin Cline (*Sophie's Choice, The Big Chill*) plays Woods. Both actors eventually fit their roles well, although Cline at first seems uncomfortable both with his South African accent and anglicized formality and polish. But his main problem is having to play a typical white liberal trekking the well-traveled route from dismissal of black activism to sympathy and finally hero worship. Only in the last half of the film, which tells the story of Woods's flight from the South African police when he tries to force an inquest into Biko's murder while "in custody," does Cline get material strong enough to make him perform. It is also the only part of the movie which has genuine dramatic life.

This is no fault of Washington in the Biko role; he convincingly demonstrates why Biko so threatened the Afrikaners, particularly when he gracefully but persistently insists that his movement will use nonviolence to achieve interracial harmony. In some courtroom scenes, it is clear how his stylish command of words and tone, his union of passionate idealism and constructive reason was far more dangerous to the status quo than a ranting radical's violent posturing. Despite being baited, Washington's Biko refuses to participate in the polarization that produces strawmen for apartheid apologists.

These scenes, however, do not occur between Woods and Biko; they occur in a trial seen in flashback, and are presented by editing so inept that it is hard to know even if Biko is the defendant. In addition to the flashback courtroom sequences, several episodes in the film free float in time zones not yet identified. Perhaps Attenborough thought that he was splicing epic with expressionism. The effect is confusion or deflation.

Several other films have taken on similar territory with better results. In Peter Weir's *Year of Living Dangerously* the white liberal (Mel Gibson) took some frightening, dizzying tours through Jakarta slums; in *Cry Freedom* Cline makes the same trip, but with none of the sickening feel of moral poison that Weir injected into his scenes. One can contrast *Cry Freedom* here with last year's independent (and risky) production from Botswana, *Place for Weeping*, which had all that Attenborough's film lacks except publicity and giant budget.

STAGE

EPIC COMMUNION

BROOK'S 'MAHABHARATA'

Epics are in love with catalogues, armor, and funerals. *The Mahabharata*, like *The Iliad*, chronicles the gathering of forces, providing the lineage and neat labels (a single adjective — brave, dauntless, godlike — or a celebratory phrase) for each of the heroes; describes armor with the kind of loving detail unseen today outside of auction rooms; lingers over rites and rituals with special attention to those that assure

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burial with honor. Unlike *The Iliad, The Mahabharata,* after centuries of interpolation, is a compendium of social, philosophical, and theological ideas. Ramesh C. Dutta, the nineteenth-century poetical civil servant who did an abridged version of the poem in the nicely jogging English meter of *Locksley Hall*, wrote that "the crystal rill of the Epic itself was all but lost in an unending morass of religious and didactic episodes, legends, tales, and traditions."

That "crystal rill" is the story of the long war between the Pandavas (Yudishsthira and his four brothers) and their cousins the Kauravas (Duryodhana and his brothers, one-hundred strong). The former are the good guys, the latter the bad guys, or so we are led to assume by the presence of Krishna, who may or may not be the incarnation of Vishnu, on the side of the Pandavas. Yet, the warriors on both sides — relatives and friends of their enemies — are heroes. Up to their hipbones in pointless slaughter, as one expects in an epic, these men tower above mere mortals by virtue of their courage and their skill — and also their friendship with or direct descent from the gods. They and their acts — triggered by greed, ambition, revenge, loyalty, honor, nobility, or forces outside themselves — are the stuff legends are made of. Anyone who wants to concentrate on the legends has to cut through both the interpolations and the rhetoric of the epic and go for character and story. Such a process is certainly necessary to put these figures on stage as Peter Brook has done in his nine-hour condensation of *The Mahabharata*.

Jean-Claude Carrière, the playwright who worked with Brook on *The Conference of the Birds* and *The Tragedy of Carmen*, prepared a dramatic version of the Epic which Brook and his company, performers from all over the world, have turned into a remarkable theater piece. There have been complaints that the English of some of the actors is too difficult to follow and that the production has retained too much of the original, piling incident on incident so thickly that the audience cannot sort out what is happening. I found the performers comprehensible for the most part and eloquent when the occasion demanded. Although there is a heavy load of plot in the third part ("The War"), presumably because Brook and Carrière want to stay with all of the sixteen main characters, the sense of fragmentation is much less pervasive than the cumulative power of the piece. *The Mahabharata* is being presented in several different ways at the Majestic Theater — a marvelous restored playing space, an adjunct to the Brooklyn Academy of Music — for its Next Wave Festival: the three parts in a marathon one-day presentation; spread over three weeks; or on three evenings in a row. I saw it in the third option and, for me, the build within the piece was the stronger for the breathing space between parts.

The Brook version uses Vyasa, "deathless bard of deathless lay," as Dutta calls him, to tell "the story of your race . . . the poetical history of mankind" to an unnamed boy, a descendant of the Pandavas. Traditionally the author of *The Mahabharata* as well as a participant in it, Vyasa here has an oddly playful relationship with his characters; their exchanges question whether events create the poem or the poem creates the events. This philosophical conundrum, which ties in with the underlying theme of life as illusion, is almost the only ambiguity in the play. A character may be capable of chicanery on stage, but he never tries to mask himself from the audience, as he might in a modern drama. These heroes, male and female, are direct whether they speak simply or in operatic overstatement, and most of them are defined by a single trait. If any clarification of action is necessary, it is given on stage by the character, by observer-participants such as Krishna, or by the storyteller. At the beginning, I found this simplicity disconcerting, but as the piece grew I was drawn in by the story, and the legend did its work without the crutch of psychological complexity.

The staging is as spare as the skeletonized epic. Rugs are unrolled as playing areas, and costumes — even the occasional gesture toward ostentation — never touch the poem's caressing fondness for the materials of display. The stage has water to splash in, sand to roll in and on which fires can be built, a wall to climb. Despite these familiar Brookian devices, the director does not provide stage pictures so much as arrangements in space, and the movement — except for the occasional frenzied dance of a demon — is deliberate, the visual equivalent of the direct speech. There are striking images but they pass quickly; at one point a large man, striding heavily, playing a long, curved instrument, momentarily becomes an elephant in a procession. Props are emblematic — a wheel for a chariot, revolving ladders for a troop formation, sticks for bows and arrows — and their manipulation becomes a more convincing suggestion of war than the familiar clang of sword on sword in Shakespeare productions. The music is a participant in rather than an accompaniment to the action. I cannot explain why all these elements add up to an effective and affecting theater piece, but — for me and for much of the audience — they did.

The ending is a problem if one takes it as a culmination of the action that has gone before, but then the ascent to heaven in the Epic is generally believed to be a later addition to the poem. The piece ends when the war ends, and the scenes that follow are a kind of tidying up, at least until Yudishsthira reaches heaven's gate and denounces the gods. The keeper dismisses the denunciation and invites him in: "Here, there is no happiness, no punishment, no family, no enemies. Rise in tranquillity. Here, words end, like thought. This was the last illusion." The other characters join him on stage for a ritual sharing of food. This may be philosophically sound within the context of *The Mahabharata*, but it is unsatisfying dramatically to have sat through nine hours of heroism and anguish and be told that it is an illusion. "We are not presuming to present the symbolism of Hindu philosophy," says Brook in his foreword to the published play. In that statement there is an explanation of why, after all, the ending felt right. We *had* just been through nine hours of illusion — theatrical illusion — and those were not the characters on stage. They were the performers, and they reached out to the audience who reached back — applause, cheers, flowers thrown on stage — to testify that a theatrical communion had taken place.

GERALD WEALES

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Last February 9, the theology department at the University of Notre Dame sponsored a major debate on abortion. The debaters in what was locally referred to as a "heavyweight bout" were James Tunstead Burtchaell, C.S.C., and Daniel C. Maguire. Father Burtchaell is a professor of theology at Notre Dame, a former provost of the university, and the author of *Rachel Weeping: the Case Against Abortion* and other books. Professor Maguire is a professor of theology at Marquette University, a past president of the Society of Christian Ethics, the author of *The Moral Choice* among other works, and an active critic of official Catholic teaching on abortion. The proposition Burtchaell and Maguire debated was: "*Recent developments and reflection provide authentic reasons to reconsider the virtually total Christian disapproval of abortion.*"

A live debate and a debate in print are very different affairs. The packed auditorium that heard Burtchaell and Maguire was certainly stimulated by the event, but the printed text allows a more reflective and careful examination than does the live performance. For this reason, *Commonweal* is pleased to publish the debaters' full presentations and rebuttals, with only minor cuts and editing. We are publishing, in addition, selections from the questions-and-answers with the audience. We have added a commentary of our own, to which Father Burtchaell and Professor Maguire have very kindly responded with their final rejoinders.

THE EDITORS

THE CATHOLIC LEGACY & ABORTION: A DEBATE

DANIEL C. MAGUIRE

In the 1930s, when the abortion issue has been most acrimonious and mischievous in church and state, honest debate is the only way to get this abortion bone out of the Catholic throat so that we can get on to more important pro-life issues.

There are more important pro-life issues. Forty-two thousand children die daily due to the lack of basic nourishment and medicine. There are now some four tons of TNT stockpiled for every head on the planet. The number of heads on the planet may reach 8.5 billion by the year 2025, with 7 billion of them being in the third world. The problems of Ethiopia are but preview of the havoc of hunger to come unless reason and justice replace militarism and greed. Meanwhile, the arms race is poised to move into outer space, leaving the earth in a state of terminal peril.

Still, the abortion debate must get on. This debate between Burtchaell and myself is important, regardless of what Burtchaell and I say. This debate implies that the issue is debatable. If the absolute negative position on abortion were clear, there would be no need to debate it. There are no pro and con debates on the morality of rape. Abortion is an open question since, as John Connery, S.J., says, "not enough time has elapsed to provide a test of current opinions." Furthermore, Catholic bishops, while pressing for a no-abortion amendment to the Constitution, have said they are not trying to force Catholic dogma into law, but to appeal to the public on the basis of reason. It is precisely on the basis of reason that Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and others disagree, and so we must reason together about our agreements and disagreements. There is no one infallible view on abortion and we do well to debate the fallible.

It may disappoint some who come to feast on conflict that Burtchaell and I are not in total disagreement on abortion. We agree in three ways: First, both Burtchaell and I are pro-moral-choice on abortion. In his book, *Rachel Weeping*, Burtchaell writes: "Save for the rare, rare instance when it is a mortal threat to a mother's life to carry her child to birth, there is no abortion that is not the unjust taking of another's life because it is a burden to one's own." Pronouncing this exception "rare, rare" is, of course, an empirical, first-world judgment. Bishop Francis

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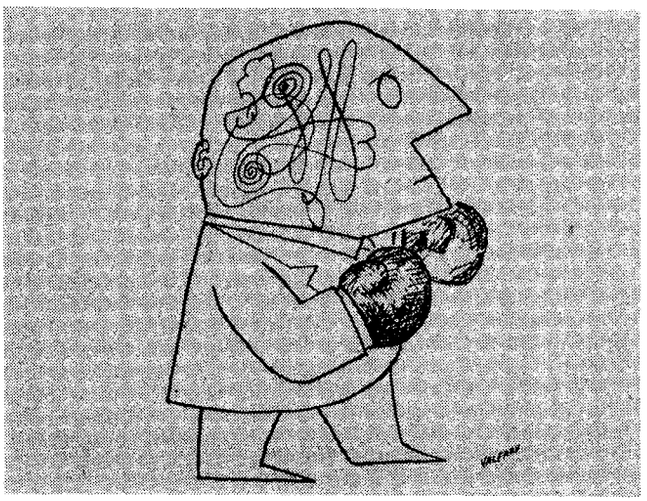
Simons, former bishop of Indore, India, says such cases are not at all rare in the third world. Thus Burtchaell is approving of a lot of direct abortions. He has admitted a class that has many members. In so doing, he departs from the Vatican theology of abortion as, of course, do I when the circumstances warrant it.

Second, neither Burtchaell nor I is pro-abortion. Indeed, only a sadist could be "pro-abortion." Abortion is a negative value at best. In Utopia, it would be almost uncalled for. This is a matter of common sense. One would not say of a woman who had a fulfilling family and professional life, that it was a pity she had not had an abortion to lend a touch of completion.

Third, both Burtchaell and I object to the idea of "abortion on demand." I object because the term is a sexist ellipsis. The phrase implies a verb, *demand*, and an object, *abortion*, but it tellingly omits the subject, *woman*. This is significant because woman is often missing in the conservative analysis of abortion. I further object to the expression "abortion on demand" because a woman should not have to demand that to which she



has a moral right. Burtchaell, it would seem, is for un-abortion on demand imposed on women. There we do not agree, and so there are grounds for debate. Basically, Burtchaell and I differ because he stakes out a definitive and apodictic position on abortion before the witness of women has been heard and evaluated in Catholic theology.

This is a major problem in conservative Catholic theology on abortion. By saying that all abortions are immoral, a stinging judgment is delivered on one to two million American women and forty to fifty million women worldwide who decide each year for abortions. The absolutist position allows for only three judgments of these women: (1) They are evil since they knowingly choose objective evil. (2) They are ignorant, and are thus excused from subjective guilt. (3)They are excused by insanity. There is no gentle alternative. We should await the newly emerging witness of women on abortion before sealing off the issue in ways that indict all or most women who make these crisis choices. This is a call for modesty, not a call to justify all abortion decisions.

I also find Burtchaell ecumenically insensitive on this issue. He seems to take no account of the broad disagreement with his simplistic position found among mainstream Protestants. The General Board of the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., said in 1981 that the decision for abortion may be morally made "when all other possible alternatives will lead to greater destruction of human life and spirit." Abortion, they continued, must be a matter of "responsible, personal decision." The American Friends Service Committee said in 1970 that "it is far better to end an unwanted pregnancy than to encourage the evils resulting from forced pregnancy and childbirth." The General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1982 listed serious threats to the mental or physical health of the woman, deformation of the fetus, and rape and incest as reasons making abortion "permissible." The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church affirmed in 1983 the *Roe v. Wade* decision of the Supreme Court and said the "principle of inviolability can be applied" only when the fetus is viable. The General Synod of the United Church of Christ said "every woman must have the freedom of choice to follow her personal religious and moral convictions concerning the completion or termination of her pregnancy." They also called for public funding for abortion. The United Methodist Church in their General Conferences in both 1976 and 1984 listed a number of cases when "the path of mature Christian judgment may indicate the advisability of abortion." The Lutheran Church in America, at its Biennial Convention in 1970, said that "on the basis of the evangelical ethic, a woman or couple may decide responsibly to seek an abortion."

A number of Jewish groups have offered similar witness, including the American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith Women, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the National Council of Jewish Women. It is simplistic and arrogant to treat all of these relatives in faith as insensitive defenders of murder or irresponsible abortion. The Second Vatican Council said the ecumenical dialogue should "start with discussions concerning the application of the Gospel to moral questions." Such discussions have barely begun and Burtchaell and others would bar the door by brandishing obnoxious analogies that compare persons with nuanced views of abortion to defenders of the Nazi Holocaust and racism.

The heart of this debate is the question: is the anti-moral-choice position on abortion *the* Christian and Catholic view? Are the Catholic bishops correct when they refer to the "clear and constant" teaching of the church on abortion? My answer is negative to both questions. There is no "clear and constant" teaching on abortion, and Catholic moral theology and Christian ethics generally have been pro-moral-choice ever since we started looking at the circumstances of abortion. Since, as Teilhard de Chardin said, nothing is intelligible outside its history, let us look to the history of abortion theology in the Christian church. In doing this, I will often refer to the work of John Connery. I do this for several reasons. To

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begin with, he holds the most conservative position on abortion since he, unlike Burtchaell and me, allows *no* exceptions. Thus I cannot be accused of bringing in a witness who shares my position. More importantly, Connery's book, *Abortion: The Development of the Roman Catholic Perspective* (Loyola, 1977) is the most important modern Catholic book on abortion. Since its publication ten years ago, it has not had the influence it deserves. I do not say Connery would agree with all my interpretations of his work. I also do not say his book is all one needs for a historical study of this issue. However, Connery's anti-moral-choice conclusions are based on his ecclesiology, not on his historical research, and that research has pro-moral-choice implications that have not been mined.

Before treating the Jewish prelude to Christian thought on abortion, Connery advises us that "the Christian attitude toward abortion will be in general continuity with the tradition of the Jews of the pre-Christian and early Christian era."

No text in the Bible discusses abortion in the terms of our debate today. The only reference in the Hebrew Bible to abortion is in Exodus 21:22 which speaks of accidental abortion. Connery says the text shows that "the fetus did not have the same status as the mother in Hebrew Law." That is certainly true. The text also suggests that the key issue was the rights of the father to progeny; he could fine you for the misdeed, but he could not claim "an eye for an eye" as he could if a person such as the woman had been killed. Thus the biblical witness on abortion.

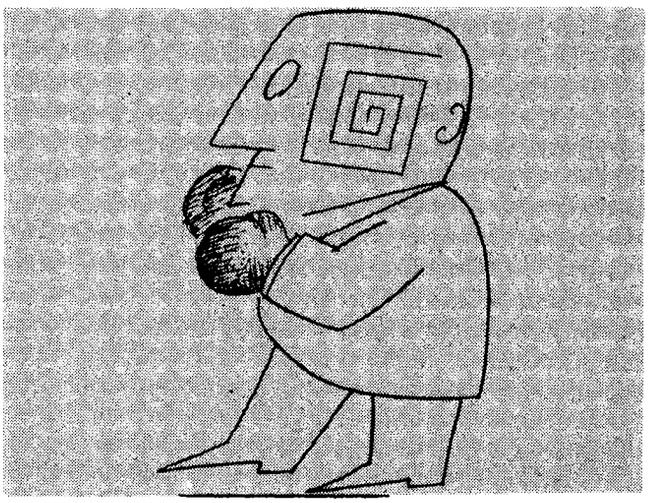
The Roman and Stoic position from which Christians would borrow freely, stressed the rights of the *paterfamilias* and that there was no soul until birth. The Jewish Talmud taught that the fetus was a part of the mother. The Mishnah says you can kill the fetus to save the mother since it is not a child until born. Josephus criticized abortion because it "diminishes the multitude." There is no evidence of a Christian revolution against these views or for them.

In the absence of scriptural support, the modern absolutists on abortion turn to the earliest Christian writers. What they find is that those few writers who mention abortion without elaboration were opposed to it, but not as homicide. No distinctively Christian position on abortion is in evidence. Indeed, there is no theology of abortion at all, according to Connery, since he says that does not begin on the subject until the thirteenth century. (I would place that beginning in the fifteenth century.) It violates historiography and the canons of literary criticism to say that *the* Christian viewpoint on abortion starts in the early church and floats clearly and constantly through the ages.

The Didache, discovered in 1875, was not a shaper of our tradition, but it is a favorite of the anti-moral-choice faction. It seems to be the product of an isolated Christian community in Syria and it draws on Jewish sources. It offers no textual evidence of discontinuity with Jewish views on abortion. Neither does *Pseudo-Barnabas*, which also had Jewish roots. Athenagoras brought up abortion in his defense against cannibalism. This is not the setting of our debate. Clement of Alexandria opposed abortion as a cover-up for fornication. We do not know what views he held on other cases since he did no theological ethics on the subject. Cyprian was concerned about the case of a man kicking a woman in the stomach until she aborted. That is a bad idea, but it is not our debate. It is text-proofing and patristic fundamentalism to pretend these texts contain, even in germ, the modern negative absolute position on abortion.

Most important of the early writers is Tertullian. In his *Apologetica*, he seems to take the Jewish position on animation at birth. Elsewhere, he inclines to the Greek view that the fetus is ensouled when sufficiently formed *in utero*. Again, eclecticism and variety. Tertullian is important on another count. He addressed what we would call craniotomy and called it a "necessary cruelty." Connery concedes that Tertullian "does use expressions which might imply a justification of the procedure in his mind." It seems that the first primitive theology on abortion is open to moral choice.

A number of fourth- and fifth-century writers adopted the Greek idea of delayed animation. Early abortion in this view



would not be homicide. Augustine said that the early fetus will perish like the sperm does. It will not rise with us at the resurrection of the dead. (Neither, he assures us, will the sperm, for which we can all be grateful.) The Council of Elvira's oft-cited canons may not refer to abortion at all, and the Council of Ancyra gives lesser punishments for abortion than for homicide. These documents influenced the Penitentials which dominated the moral scene from the sixth to the eleventh centuries.

In sum, let it be said that the sparse references to abortion in the first twelve hundred years of the Christian era are set in this context: (1) All occurred before the beginning of any formal theology on abortion. (2) They rose from a period of ignorance of the processes of generation, the ovum having been discovered only in the nineteenth century. (3) They came at a time of underpopulation. (4) They came in a time of notable sexism and negativity to sexuality. (5) Abortion was often condemned as a violation

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of the procreative nature of sex and not as murder. As Susan Teft Nicholson says, it is "misleading" in the terms of our public debate "to maintain that the Roman Catholic church has always condemned abortion." Sometimes abortion is called homicide, but so too are contraception and sterilization, suggesting that a dominant concern was sex used non-procreatively. It is fallacious and disingenuous to say that Christian teachers always condemned abortion without saying on what grounds they did so and without saying whether one accepts and argues from those same grounds today. At least the Vatican is consistent: it applies the natural law argument that sex is intrinsically procreative and rules out homosexuality, sterilization, and birth control.

The thirteenth was not the greatest of centuries for the theology of abortion. Small wonder Connery finds it "disappointing." Albert the Great revealed the central concern (which was for sex as necessarily procreative) by saying that sterilization is more damaging than abortion. Thomas Aquinas, in his entire *Summa*, has no articles on abortion at all. He only mentions the subject in answering two objections, one on accidental abortion and one on killing a woman to baptize her fetus. (Thomas said that was not to be done.) Elsewhere Thomas accepted the idea of delayed ensoulment. The thirteenth century did not share today's obsession with abortion.

Real analytical theological ethics of abortion began in the fifteenth century. Two Thomists set the tone for what would become common opinion into the eighteenth century. Antoninus, the archbishop of Florence, and John of Naples allowed early abortions of unanimated fetuses to save the woman. They opposed the abortion of animated fetuses partly because of the perceived need for baptism and also for fear for the life of the woman from a late abortion, given the crude state of surgery then. These writers allowed probability as the basis for judgment whether or not the fetus was animated, giving the benefit of the doubt, in effect, to the woman. They did this even though they believed that baptism was necessary for salvation. This presaged the modern contention of scholars like Carole Tauer that the *dubium facti* of animation was equivalent to a *dubium juris*, in the language of later Probabilism, thus justifying some abortions as moral. The opinion approving direct early abortion became common in the church and was used in confessional practice.

The sixteenth century brought the influential Antoninus de Corduba into abortion theology. He said that if medicine of its nature is conducive to the health of the woman, even if it causes the abortion of an animated fetus, it may be used. The mother had a "prior right"; her health was more important than the life of the fetus. Thus bathing, bleeding, purgatives, or pain-killers could be used even though they were abortifacient. His language lacks the precision of early twentieth-century moral theology, but he clearly used a very broad reading of "saving the woman's life." It is hard to see the treatments he discusses as being a matter of life and death. Certainly, you could not kill a person just to save yourself from pain or to get your bowels moving. Corduba expanded the discussion.

Jesuit Thomas Sanchez, who died in the early seventeenth century, said all his contemporary theologians justified early abortions to save the woman. He introduced the idea which had much resonance that the fetus may be a quasi-aggressor. As Connery says: "Anyone who reads his text can hardly doubt that he is speaking of what later authors will call direct abortion." Catholic theology was struggling with the complexities of this issue and not succumbing to the panacea of a simplistic negative absolute.

After Sanchez, other theologians argued that the fetus is a kind of unjust aggressor at times, or that the fetus is not a formal but a material aggressor like an insane person, and that even causes like the woman's reputation might at times be enough to justify early, direct abortions. These Catholic theologians were allowed to debate the issue freely and they did not behave like men (they were all men) who possessed a factotum principle that would solve all or almost all abortion questions.

In the mid-nineteenth century, *Revue Théologique* published an essay in which it was argued that an abortion could be performed to save a woman four or five months pregnant if she would bleed to death without the abortion. The Holy Office had already declined to solve such a case even though several of its members favored the abortion. The Jesuit Ballerini of the Roman College justified therapeutic abortions by using a novel distinction between the acceleration of the birth with the resultant death of the fetus, and direct attacks on the fetus. Another Jesuit, Augustine Lehmkuhl who died in 1917, allowed the death of the animated fetus to save the life of the woman, and he called this a probable opinion. As was admitted at the time, this was direct abortion intended as a means. Lehmkuhl said the fetus could be assumed to have surrendered its right to life just as a person can give up a lifejacket to a friend.

The nineteenth-century debates on craniotomy also showed more flexibility than the anti-moral-choice partisans today. In 1869 the Sacred Penitentiary referred a questioner on a craniotomy case to the "well-tested and reliable authors" (*auctores probati*: a term that is usually mistranslated "approved authors") for an answer. This, in effect, invoked the tradition of Probabilism for what is virtually infanticide. Even two editors of the Vatican's *Acta Sanctae Sedis* defended direct killing through craniotomy, as did a number of other theologians.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Vatican changed its mind on these matters and tried to impose cloture on theological discussion. Here, of course, we leave moral theology and philosophy and enter ecclesiology. The ecclesiological question is: do the Vatican dicasteries possess a supernatural talent to see through and beyond the empirical complexities of these issues and are they endowed with the exclusive power to reach beyond theology and philosophy to irrefragable absolutes that are immune to informed dissent? The primitive ecclesiology that affirms such tendentially magical power bears burdens of proof that cannot be met.

As these debates arrive into the twentieth century, we can see that they had not achieved a high level of clarity. Even the

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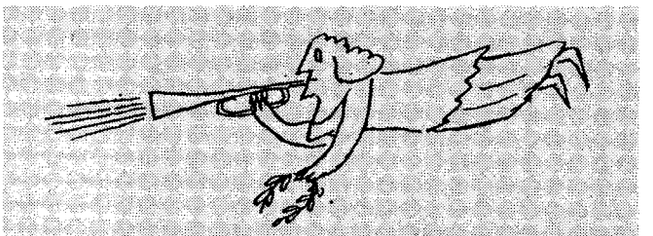
critical category "direct/indirect," which still dominates the conservative position today, was a greased pig that could not be tied down. In 1932, Gregorian University's Arthur Vermeersch marked out three different meanings of "direct/indirect," and the meanings have multiplied since Vermeersch. Those who say that the "clear and constant" Catholic teaching is that you may never directly terminate fetal life are standing on a loose philosophical plank. And it is a *philosophical* plank, not a given of faith.

The abortion debate in our day has taken on an intensity it never before had. It also has a new breadth for Catholics with Vatican II's recognition of the truly ecclesial nature of Protestant communions and with the arrival of laity and women into theology. It becomes even more inaccurate to speak of *the* Christian view. This is not to say that clerical theologians have not paid some dues on the issue. On the occasion of the Vatican attack on Charles Curran, hundreds of theologians internationally declared his work well within the perimeters of Catholic orthodoxy. He justifies abortion "to save human life" or for values "commensurate with human life." These commensurate values could be grave threats to the psychological health of the woman and extreme socio-economic conditions. Richard McCormick, who is widely seen as a moderate in moral theology, finds Curran's position "very close" to his own and adds that abortion can be justified by other values "consistent with our assessment of the values justifying the taking of extrauterine life." Now, as ever, there is no one Christian view of the morality of abortion.

The negative absolutists on abortion say that the personhood question has been settled by modern embryology. This is a strange departure since the tradition has always maintained that there is something transcendent about personhood, something spiritual called a "soul" by the ancients. The mystery here cannot be settled by a materialistic and scientific analysis. The effort to do so reveals the theological emptiness of the absolutists.

What comes close to being "clear and constant" in the tradition is the theory of what is called "delayed animation," or "ensoulment." For nineteen hundred years, the early conceptum was not seen as a person. Opinions have run the full gamut from conception to puberty! The Greek view of ensoulment in forty to ninety days was dominant, but the jurist Baldus and some of the Louvain theologians like John Marcus said the rational soul did not arrive until birth.

Significantly, there were and are no funerals for miscarriages. The Holy Office in 1713 forbade baptism of a fetus that was not well formed. St. Alphonsus Liguori spoke as a traditionalist when he said: "Some are mistaken who say that the fetus is ensouled from the first moment of its conception, since the fetus is certainly not animated before it is formed." The prestigious *Catechism of the Council of Trent* said that if Jesus was animated at conception it was a miracle because "in the natural order, no body can be informed by a human soul except after the prescribed space of time." Dominican H.M. Héring said in 1951 that the theory of delayed animation still had strong Catholic support "especially among the philosophers, who are wont to investigate the matter more profoundly than the moralists and the canonists." As Professor Carol Tauer says, if one were to argue for the presence of a rational soul, "there is better positive argument available for animals like mature dolphins than there is for human zygotes, morulae, and blastocysts."



Extra copies of this special issue are available: $2 each (includes first-class postage); 10-24 copies $1.25 each; 25 copies $1 each (postpaid).

The most intelligent way to be anti-abortion is to look to the causes of unwanted pregnancies. Too often in the past we looked only at the woman with the crisis pregnancy, not to hear her, but to stone her, picket her, excommunicate her, and call our work pro-life. We should look rather to the causes that bring women to the clinic door and attack those rather than the women.

I would list sexism as the first cause of unwanted pregnancies. Sexism is the belief that women are inferior, and how do you make love to an inferior? Carelessly and casually. This yields the hostile inseminator syndrome. It is hostility to enter a woman's body sexually taking no account of the fact that you may thereby be entering the next century. In terms of Christian hope, the implications may be eternal.

Poverty brings women to the clinic door, since poverty breeds chaos and despair and these breed unwanted pregnancies. In this light, the military budget can be seen as a major abortifacient in our society. That largely useless budget which sucks $35 million an hour, twenty-four hours a day, out of our economic veins, causes social decay with its yield of unwanted pregnancies.

The surprised virgin syndrome leads to unwanted pregnancies. This is the inability to admit that the relationship is nearing the point where it could get sexual and that moral choices are called for. Counselors are told that "it just happened," but that is not candid since the onset of sexual ardor is noticeable.

The cult of romantic love produces unwanted pregnancies. The couple in the movie who tumble into bed for the final denouement are not to be interrupted for contraceptive indignities. The sacred exigencies of romantic love must be honored whatever the cost to the woman. And there are other social evils that contribute to unwanted pregnancies: the lack of sex

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education, the religious ban on contraception, and the negative attitudes toward sexuality that lead to eruptive sex.

Christians might best imitate the apostle Paul who, when he wrote to the sexually rambunctious Corinth, where abortion could have been no stranger, produced an epic song of love. The Judeo-Christian treasure houses a notion of love that could lead to more respectful relationships and more reverent sexual mores and fewer and fewer women at the clinic door.

As the abortion debate continues, I hope it would be freed from noxious and insulting analogies. The Holocaust imagery, used by Burtchaell and others, is repulsive in this context. It is offensive for Jewish people and other victims to be compared to blastocysts, embryos, and fetuses. It is especially galling when this is done by Catholics who, as a church, were not distinguished in their resistance to the real Holocaust. Slavery is another false analogue that equates pre-personal with personal life. And, once again, Catholics in this country were not in the forefront of the fight against slavery or for civil rights. Such analogies do not encourage the reasoned discourse that the problem of abortion needs.

JAMES TUNSTEAD BURTCHAELL

The men and women who first tried to follow the risen Jesus were Jews. They were not entirely unprepared for the moral demands this would make on them. The Christian road followed terrain already familiar to Jewish moral teaching. Infidelity was to be avoided in all its forms: adultery, incest, and idolatry. Believers were never to take crafty advantage of others, by perjury or sorcery or usury. And they were to restrain themselves from all violence, whether drunkenness, gossip, or murder. This ethical standard rests as firmly on rabbinical teaching as on the New Testament, which shows what a direct lineage there is from Hellenistic Judaism to early Christianity.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus invites his followers to go even further along this Way. It was not enough to spare your neighbor's life; you must not even hurl insults at him. If adultery was wrong, then so was lustful intent. And there was scant advantage from being a person of your sworn word if you were a chiseler whenever you were not under oath. Yet even this prophetic summons to a righteousness higher than that of the scribes and Pharisees would have found strong endorsement in many of the better synagogues around Judaea.

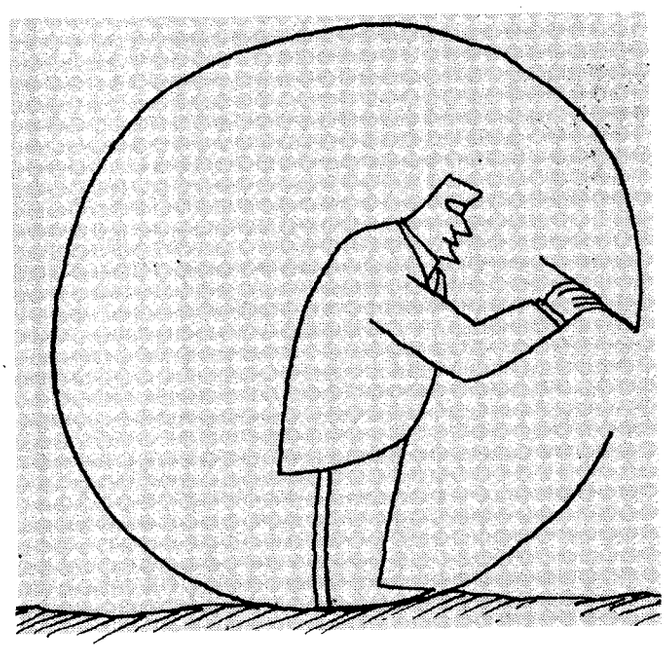
Christian moral doctrine showed its direct descent from Jewish ethics. It was ironic, then, that its great breakaway point of departure would be from one of the teachings Christians and Jews most closely shared. Both synagogue and church taught that authentic religion meant coming to the aid of women and children deprived of breadwinners, and of the indigent and the refugee aliens. Nothing could be more traditional for a Jew or more fundamental for a Christian than this ancient commitment to provide for the widow, the orphan, the pauper, the stranger. Yet it was precisely here that the young Christian community found a distinctive vigor and vision, and set forth from its mother's house on a moral journey of its own.

The alien and the pauper, the widow and the orphan, classic beneficiaries of preferential sustenance since Sinai, were suggestive to the Jesus people of four other forlorn categories that they must safeguard: the enemy and the slave, the wife and the infant—unborn or newborn.

The resident alien had to be guaranteed shelter, for he dwelt within the national enclosure of the land and trusted its people. But the Christian was bidden go far beyond protecting the nearby alien. He was charged to cherish the distant enemy. He had heard it said that he must love his neighbor and hate his enemy. Jesus told him he must love his enemy even at the risk of receiving hatred from both his countrymen and his enemy. He was to set no more bounds to his bounty than the Father who lavished sunshine and rainfall on all fields alike. His pattern was the Lord Jesus who had loved to the death those who betrayed and denied and deserted and condemned and crucified him.

The poor were always a special charge on the Christian's conscience. But their endless needs suggested another, even more vulnerable, group. For those "in the Lord," no one was any longer to be demeaned as mere property of another. Even slaves had to be dealt with as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Every man was to join in supporting the wives his fellow



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believers had left behind as widows. But now he was startled to be told that he no longer had a male's freedom of choice to dismiss his own wife. Jesus' rejection of divorce affected men and women differently, since only husbands had previously been free to reject their partners. Now women could no longer be chosen and then discarded by their men. Both alike must now be faithful throughout life, if they loved and married in the Lord.

There were four radical, prophetic imperatives that the new Christian faith set before those who would live in the Spirit and fire of Christ: four disconcerting duties that would distance them from Jews and Romans alike. First, the command to love their enemies struck down forever their exclusionary allegiance to a single race or nation. Second, the command to acknowledge slaves and masters as brothers and sisters condemned slavery to a long and sullen retreat, and ultimately to extinction. Third, the command that husbands and wives were to pledge an equal fidelity was a first yet crucial rejection of the corruption of men and women by their respective domination and acquiescence. These were thunderclaps of moral exclamation that bound the small and scrappy new fellowship to make the purpose of their lives the liberation of those most at a loss.

And there was a fourth point of radical conversion, for there was a fourth group of victims they had to embrace. Beyond the children orphaned by their parents' deaths were those still more helpless children whom their parents slew themselves.

Early Jewish law seems to have regarded the unborn as paternal property. A monetary indemnity was due to the father from anyone who caused his wife to abort. By the time of Jesus some Jewish circles were ready to see the fully formed fetus as a protectable human being. But abortion law was scanty and ambiguous. Roman law in the same era offered no protection against either abortion or infanticide, both of which were within the prerogatives of the male head-of-household. Neither tradition offered a protection for infants reliable enough to suit the first Christians, and they soon stated their own conviction which was to the point.

The most ancient Christian document we possess, besides the New Testament, is called *The Didache, The Instruction of the Twelve Apostles*. Already in this first-century catechism, the obligation to protect the unborn and the infant was included within the roster of essential moral duties:

> You shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not prey upon boys; you shall not fornicate; you shall not deal in magic; you shall not practice sorcery; you shall not murder a child by abortion, or kill a newborn; you shall not covet your neighbor's goods . . . (*Didache* 2:2-3).

In a later passage the instruction describes what it calls "the way of death":

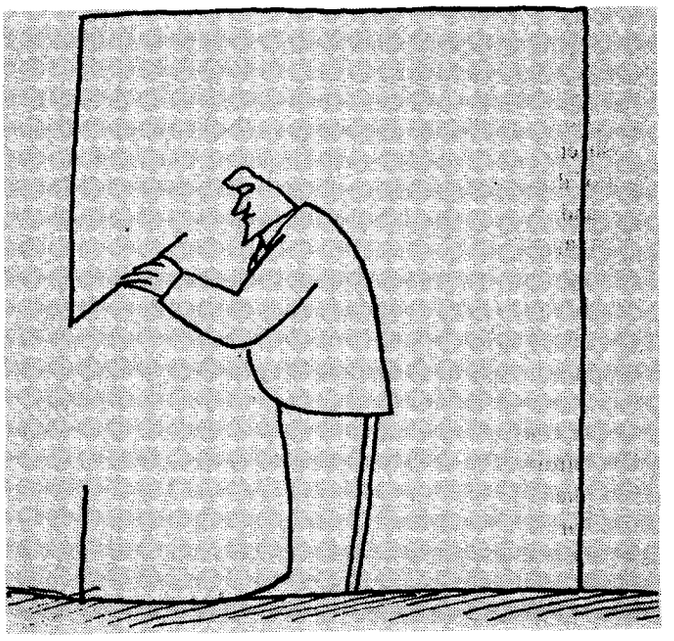
> It is the path of those who persecute the innocent, despise the truth, find their ease in lying . . . those who have no generosity for the poor, nor concern for the oppressed, nor any knowledge of who it was who made them; they are killers of children, destroyers of God's handiwork; they turn their backs on the needy and take advantage of the afflicted; they are cozy with the affluent but ruthless judges of the poor: sinners to the core. Children, may you be kept safe from it all! (5:2).

The Greek is as straightforward as my translation, bluntly choosing words like "kill" (*apokteinein*) and "murder"(*phoneuein*). Its word for abortion, *phthora*, means, literally, "destruction," and the one destroyed is called "child," *teknon*, the same gentle word used in the final sentence to address the readers themselves.

Shortly before or after the turn of the second century, the *Letter of Barnabas* repeats the *Didache's* injunction against abortion and infanticide in virtually the same words, and laments that they destroy small images of God (*Barnabas* 19:5; 20:2).

Early in the second century the Christian movement had achieved momentum enough to arouse antagonism in Roman society. Some of the most articulate writers of that age were apologists defending their fellow Christians against libel. And one of the slanders that outraged them most was the rumor that Christians slew infants to obtain blood for their eucharistic rites. It was a particularly galling lie, precisely because protection of the young had become such a Christian priority. These apologists did not conceal their contempt for the surrounding pagan society which was willing to destroy its young by choice. Minucius Felix, a Roman attorney of African origin, states the contrast angrily:

> There is a man I should now like to address, and that is the one who claims, or believes, that our initiations take place by means of the slaughter and blood of a baby. Do you think it possible to inflict fatal wounds on a baby so tender and tiny? That there could be anyone who would butcher a newborn babe, hardly yet a human being, who would shed and drain its blood? The only person capable



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THE HUMAN FAMILY UNDERSTANDING OTHER PEOPLE

(formerly Books for Brotherhood)

Children's and Young Adults' List

EACH YEAR a representative committee draws up a list of books for children and young adults, books that best portray relationships among people of different origins, races, and religions. The complete list, selected from books published from August 1986 through July 1987 is meant to cover a wide range of ages, interests, and readability. The following selection from the complete list is presented by the publishers named below.

And the Violins Stopped Playing: a Story of the Gypsy Holocaust, *by Alexander Ramati, Watts, 1986. $15.95*

Led by a musician from Warsaw who has had a warning from his cousin, a tribe of Lowland Gypsies escape from the occupying Nazis by wagon, horseback and foot into the relative safety of Hungary, where they hope to resume their traditional Gypsy life. It is just when they believe they have found security that the greatest danger arises. This is an electrifying novel of a little-known aspect of the Nazi Holocaust based on the notes of Roman Mirga, a Gypsy who lived through it. (14 and up)

Anne Frank Remembered, *by Miep Gies with Alison Leslie Gold. Simon & Schuster, 1987. $17.95*

Miep Gies was the woman who risked her own life to hide Anne Frank and her family from the Nazis during World War II. Only now, forty years later, has she chosen to tell her own story of those dangerous years. Although an adult book, these fascinating and moving memoirs will be of interest to anyone of any age familiar with *The Diary of Anne Frank.* (12 and up)

Black Indians, *by William Loren Katz, Atheneum, 1986. $15.95*

As early as the 16th century, runaway Black slaves found shelter with Native Americans and stayed to found new families. The history of the role of Black Indians in the development of the United States is one of courage and a desire for freedom. The use of antique prints and photographs helps bring this hidden chapter in history to life. (11 and up)

The Cage, *by Ruth Minsky Sender. Macmillan, 1986. $13.95*

This is the gripping story of one young woman's Holocaust experience. For two harrowing years the Minsky family suffered hunger and fear in the Lodz ghetto only to find themselves deported to Auschwitz. Ultimately, the human spirit triumphs as 18-year-old Riva is sent to a slave labor camp and survives only because of the traces of humanity and compassion still present in some of her Nazi captors. (14 and up)

Clara's Story, *by Clara Isaacman, Jewish Publication Society. $11.95*

Clara, 14 years old at the time, chronicles the story of her family's years in hiding during the Nazi occupation of Belgium. Through the kindness of many strangers, the Hellers were kept safe as they moved from one secret cellar or attic to another. Their love, strength and tenacity overwhelmed any fear, despair or loss of hope. (10-14)

The Children We Remember, *by Chana Byers Abells. Photos from Yad Vashem Archives. Greenwillow, 1986. $9.95*

Originally published in 1983, this reissue is among the most poignant records of the Holocaust. Its black-and-white photographs show Jewish children before the Nazis took them away and later depict the contrast and the violence attending some of their attempts to escape. The picture book format is a surprising choice for the stark, mature and emotionally disturbing subject. (8 and up)

Come a Stranger, *by Cynthia Voight. Atheneum, 1986. $14.95*

The Tillerman family saga continues *(Dicey's Song)* with focus this time on Mina, the young Black ballet dancer who is rejected from an all-white ballet school. It is also a love story which is resolved with Mina's growing maturity and reunion of Dicey's family and Tamer Shipp, the pastor who is the summer replacement. (9-12)

Doc, *by Richard Graber. Harper & Row, 1986. $13.95*

As an old man grows angry and frustrated with his battle against Alzheimer's disease, a young boy confronts issues relating to aging, illness, love and death. (12-14)

Ellis Island: Gateway to the New World, *by Leonard Everett Fisher. Holiday House, 1986. $12.95*

The author/artist traces the history from 1634, when Ellis Island was purchased by the Dutch from the Indians, to its restoration as an historical site in 1985. First-person accounts document the immigrants' reaction to their new country. (9-12)

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For Tatiana: When Love Triumphed Over the Kremlin, *by Edward Lozansky. Holt, 1986. $17.95*

In 1972 Edward Lozansky, a Soviet nuclear physicist of Jewish origin, married Tatiana Kozlova daughter of one of Russia's highest-ranking generals. Theirs was a life of privilege and luxury, but one thing was missing — freedom. The lack of freedom became so stifling they decided they had to leave. Edward left first with the promise that Tatiana would soon be allowed to follow. The promise was not kept and there followed a six-year struggle against the Soviet state to reunite the couple and their daughter. It is a story of hunger strikes, petitions, demonstrations, courage, faith, perseverance — but above all, a story of love. (14 and up)

Georgia Music, *by Helen V. Griffith. Illustrated by James Stevenson. Greenwillow, 1986. Picture book. $11.75*

When a little girl visits her grandfather in the backwoods of Georgia, the old man teaches her how to play some old songs on the mouth organ. By the next summer, he must move in with her family in Baltimore, and the girl makes him feel at home by playing those old songs for him. A warm, touching story full of a special feeling for the love between generations. (5-8)

Going Home, *by Nicholasa Mohr. Dial, 1986. $11.95*

The heroine, Felita, appears again, this time as a pre-teen, 12 years old, in a traditional Puerto Rican family. Her trip to Puerto Rico is only one of her problems. For there she is considered a "Nuyorican" and at home she must combat new family rules and regulations as she tries to assert her independence. (8-11)

Happily May I Walk: American Indians and Alaskan Natives Today, *by Arlene Hirschfelder. Scribner's, 1986. $12.95*

A fascinating look at the life of Indians, Eskimos (Inuits), and Aleuts, correcting distorted views of these ancient peoples, and explaining their modern lives. The author is a noted consultant on Indian concerns, and has often written articles about Indian language, culture, sports and rituals. (10 and up)

Happy Christmas Gemma, *by Sarah Hayes. Illustrated by Jan Ormerod. Lothrop, 1986. $13.00*

Preparations for Christmas in a Black household are lovingly described through the eyes of a brother who interprets every step for his sister, a toddler. Colorful illustrations capture the holiday spirit and warmth of the family for younger readers. (5-8)

I Am a Star, *by Inge Auerbacher. Prentice-Hall/Simon & Schuster, 1986. $9.95*

"Of the fifteen thousand children imprisoned in Terezin Concentration Camp in Czechoslovakia between 1941 and 1945, about one hundred survived. I am one of them." Thus begins Auerbacher's haunting and ultimately uplifting retelling of these years. Interspersed with the narration are original poetry, photographs and drawings by artist Israel Bernbaum. A unique book — easy to read yet very powerful. (10-14)

I Like You, If You Like Me: Poems of Friendship, *by Myra Cohn Livingston. Margaret K. McElderry Books. 1987. $11.95*

Old, familiar and contemporary poems explore the universal qualities of friendship. This anthology is unique because the theme is traced in poetry from different cultures. (8 and up)

Selected by . . .
Edith G. Selig, Coordinator
Janet Austin, Media Specialist/Librarian, Clifton High School, Clifton, New Jersey
Joseph Benkovitz, Librarian, Springfield Gardens High School, New York
Michael Patrick Hearn, Author, critic
Ruth Rausen, Former Coordinator of Young Adult Services, The New York Public Library
Barbara Rollock, Former Coordinator of Children's Services, The New York Public Library
Roslyn Rubinstein, Former Head of Young Adult Divison, Central Library, Queens Borough Public Library
Committee members pro tem: Marilyn Iarusso, Karlan Sick

I Wear the Morning Star, *by Jamake Hightower. Harper & Row, 1986. $11.70*

Fictional memories of a Northern Plains Indian woman, chronicling three generations of her family's life. Her experiences when she is sent to a non-Indian foster home provide disturbing insights into cultural clashes and prejudices. (14 and up)

In With the Out Crowd, *by Norma Howe. Houghton, 1986 $12.95*

Robin, 16, has always been one of the most popular girls in her school's "in" crowd. She discovers, much to her surprise, that life and love exist outside her clique. With good humor, Robin finds friends who share her values. (12 and up)

Indian Chiefs, *by Russell Freedman. Holiday House, 1987. $15.95*

Beginning in the 1840s, the white man went West in great numbers, claiming the Indian hunting grounds for himself and making and breaking many treaties. Each tribal chief had to choose a course of action — cooperate with the whites or resist and make war. Through historic photos and drawings and a lively, highly readable text, this book traces the stories of six western Indian chiefs, including Red Cloud and Sitting Bull, as they led their people through this difficult and tragic time. (10 and up)

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Izzy, Willy Nilly, *by Cynthia Voight. Atheneum, 1986. $14.95*

A popular girl is seriously injured in an automobile accident, and the changes in her life teach her much about friendship, self-confidence, and her own worth as a person. (12 and up)

Jackie Robinson: A Life Remembered, *by Maury Allen. Watts, 1987. $16.95*

It was only forty years ago that the color line of the National Game was finally broken. Drawing on recent interviews with family, friends, and admirers, Maury Allen vividly describes how Jackie Robinson, through his talent and courage, changed not only baseball but American history. (14 and up)

Jamaica's Find, *by Juanita Havill. Illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien. Houghton, 1986. Picture book. $12.95*

When Jamaica first finds an abandoned toy dog, she wants to keep him for herself. But when she resolves to restore him to his rightful owner, she discovers something even more special — a new friend. A simple story vividly illustrated. (3-5)

Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa, *by Mark Mathabane. Macmillan, 1986. $19.95*

Mark Mathabane's autobiography is a remarkable account of his childhood and youth as a Black in South Africa. The degradation of both Blacks and whites caused by apartheid is evident in this moving memoir. Through talent, intelligence, and exceptional good luck, the author was able to leave a concentration camp sort of existence and come to the U.S. on a tennis scholarship at age 18. (14 and up)

Living in Two Worlds, *by Maxine B. Rosenberg. Illustrated with photographs by George Ancona. Lothrop, 1986. $10.95*

This affectionate photographic essay explores the conflicts as well as the advantages of being children of parents of different races, faiths, and nationalities, and how these boys and girls view their own dual worlds. (8-11)

Making a New Home in America, *by Maxine Rosenberg. Morrow, 1986. $10.00*

Through photographs and a brief text we meet four children new to the United States. Their experiences, often told in their own words, paint a touching and realistic picture of what life is like for many of our new Americans. (7-10)

Mary McLeod Bethune: Voice of Black Hope, *by Milton Meltzer. Illustrated by Stephen Marchesi. Viking Kestrel, 1987. $10.95*

Born to parents who had been slaves,Mary showed an early aptitude for learning. She went on to become a renowned teacher, founded Bethune-Cookman College and the National Council of Negro Women, and became an adviser to President Franklin Roosevelt. Through the era of segregation, lynchings and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, she worked tirelessly for racial equality and constantly spurred Black people to reach for greater heights. (9-12)

The Moonlight Man, *by Paula Fox. Bradbury, 1986. $12.95*

A young girl's experiences with her parents' divorce, her father's alcoholism and her own maturity. (12-16)

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters, *written and illustrated by John Steptoe. Lothrop, 1987. Picture book. $13.00*

In this graceful retelling of a Kaffir variant of the classic fairy tale, "Diamonds and Toads," this justly honored author-illustrator has provided stunning full-color pictures, introducing the beauties of the ancient civilization of what is now Zimbabwe to children of all ages. (5-8)

Rainbow Effect, *by Kathyln Gay. Watts, 1987. $11.90*

Through interviews with members of interracial and multi-ethnic families, author Gay shows the reader the special problems and prejudices children in these families must deal with in their everyday life. Their greatest challenge is to feel pride and acceptance in an unaccepting society. (12 and up)

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Skindeep, *by Toeckey Jones. Harper & Row, 1986. $12.95*

Rhonda, a white South African college student, is at first repelled by Dave's shaved head and is puzzled by his changeable moods, but she finds herself falling deeply in love with him. When they vacation in Cape Town, Rhonda discovers that Dave has been living a lie and the shadow of apartheid comes between then. The ending of this realistic novel allows a glimmer of hope but provides no easy answers. (12-16)

So Far From the Bamboo Grove, *by Yoko Kawashima Watkins. Lothrop, 1986. $10.25*

When a Japanese girl who has grown up in Korea must leave that land and return to Japan, she faces life as a refugee in a country that does not welcome her. At the same time, her brother, separated from the family, must make his way to safety. (10-14)

The Stones Cry Out. A Cambodian Childhood 1975-1980, *by Molyda Szymusiak. Hill & Wang. $17.95*

Twelve-year-old Molyda endured as her family members starved to death or were executed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. In 1980, she and three younger cousins escaped to Thailand after five years of hardship. Her memoir vividly describes the terror of her daily life and the strength of her will and spirit. (16 and up)

USA for Africa, *by Gilda Berger. Illustrated with photographs. Watts, 1987. $10.90*

As this straightforward, no-nonsense account explains, rock and roll has long supported many social causes. There has been a great moment in the last few years through pop music to help one's fellow people. From "Band-Aid" and "Live Aid" for the starving in Africa to "Farm Aid" and "Hands Across America" for the poor in the United States, pop musicians have done much to make these causes internationally recognized and effective. (10-14)

Visiting Miss Pierce, *by Pat Derby. Farrar, Straus, 1986. $11.95*

When freshman Barry Wilson is assigned to visit 83-year-old Miss Pierce for a class project, he feels odd when she mistakes him for her older brother, Willie. He becomes curious about this adored older brother and tries to learn whatever happened to Willie and his family. As an adopted child, Barry wonders about his own roots when he learns that Willie's son was given for adoption. (11 and up)

Water Sky, *by Jean Craighead George. Harper & Row, 1987. $11.95*

Lincoln Noah Stonewright has arrived in Barrow, Alaska to stay with the family of Vincent Ologak, an Eskimo whaling captain. Here, where the temperature is so low that spilled water hits the ground as ice, Lincoln becomes part of the whale hunt and meets young Eskimos for the first time. But it is mainly through Ukpik, the young Eskimo girl, and Vincent Ologak that Lincoln begins to understand himself and the clash between the Eskimo and white cultures. This is a moving novel of self-discovery and first love. (10-14)

Whipping Boy, *by Sid Fleischman. Illustrated by Peter Sis. Greenwillow, 1986. $11.75*

In this amusing adventure story, we meet Prince Bart and Jemmy, his whipping boy. The plot and characterization become somewhat Dickensian when Bart runs away from the palace, taking Jemmy with him. He not only gets his comeuppance, but discovers the true meaning of friendship. (9-12)

Winnie Mandela: the Soul of South Africa, *by Milton Meltzer. Viking, 1986. $9.95*

Winnie and Nelson Mandela have become synonymous with Black South Africa's struggle for equality. This is an engrossing yet simple biography of Winnie, with the emphasis on her early years and her development as a leader of her people. (8-10)

For the complete "Human Family" booklist write to:
The National Conference of Christians and Jews, 71 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003

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of believing this is one capable of actually perpetrating it. And, in fact, it is a practice of yours, I observe, to expose your own children to birds and wild beasts, or at times to smother and strangle them—a pitiful way to die; and there are women who swallow drugs to stifle in their womb the beginnings of a man on the way—committing infanticide even before they give birth to their infant (*Octavius* 30:1-2).

The same rumor was challenged by Athenagoras of Athens. How could Christians be accused of murder when they refused even to attend the circus events where humans perished as gladiators or as victims of wild beasts? Christians consider, he wrote, that even standing by and tolerating murder was much the same as murder itself. He then continues:

> We call it murder and say it will be accountable to God if women use instruments to procure abortion: how shall we be called murderers ourselves? The same person cannot regard that which a woman carries in her womb as a living creature, and therefore as an object of value to God, and then slay the creature that has come forth to the light of day (*Embassy for the Christians* 35).

Tertullian, perhaps the most eloquent of the second century apologists, repeatedly opposed the teaching of the Stoics that children are not yet alive in the womb, and that their soul is given them at birth. Arguing from philosophical more than biological grounds, he insisted that the body and soul grow together from the beginning.

> We have established the principle that all the natural potentialities of the soul with regard to sensation and intelligence are inherent in its very substance, as a result of the intrinsic nature of the soul. As the various stages of life pass, these powers develop, each in its own way, under the influence of circumstances, whether of education, environment, or of the supreme powers (*De Anima* 38:1; see also 37).

Abortion, he said, was not only homicide, it was parricide: the slaying of one's own flesh and blood.

> With us, murder is forbidden once for all. We are not free to destroy anyone conceived in the womb, while the blood is still being absorbed to build up the human being. To prevent the birth of a child is simply a swifter way to murder. It makes no difference whether one destroys a soul already born or interferes with it on its way to birth. It is a human being and one who will be a human being, for every fruit is there present in the seed (*Apologeticum* 9:8; see also 9:4-7).

Even in the case of a child whose uterine position makes birth impossible, when Tertullian would accept dismemberment to save the mother's life, he bluntly says the child is being "butchered by unavoidable savagery" (*De Anima* 25:4).

These are statements Christian apologists were making to outsiders. Among themselves, abortion continued to be reviled as a procedure unthinkable for believers. Clement of Alexandria, perhaps the leading theologian of the second century, wrote:

> If we would only control our lusts at the start, and if we would refrain from killing off the human race born or developing according to the divine plan, then our entire lives would be lived in harmony with nature as well. But women who resort to some sort of deadly abortion drug slay not only the embryo but, along with it, all human love [*philanthropia*] (*The Pedagogue* 96).

Early in the next century Hippolytus of Rome condemned bishop Callistus for his readiness to encourage marriage, legal or otherwise, between affluent women and lower class or slave-class men. Such unions, he observed, had only tended to encourage abortion.

> Women who pass for believers began to resort to drugs to induce sterility, and to bind their abdomens tightly so as to abort the conceptus, because they did not want to have a child by a slave or lower-class type, for the sake of their family pride and their excessive wealth. Look what abuse of duty this lawless man has encouraged, by inciting them both to adultery and to murder. And after such outrageous activity they have the nerve to call themselves a Catholic church! (*Refutation of All Heresies* 9:12:25).

These forthright voices from the first and formative Christian years, all argued that the destruction of the child— unborn or newborn— is infamy for those who follow Christ.

Now I call your attention to five facts, five aspects of that early Christian conviction, which we should note and take to heart. First, the repudiation of abortion was not an isolated or esoteric doctrine. It formed part of an obligation by all believers to protect the four categories of people whom they now saw as peculiarly exposed to the whim and will of their fellow humans: the slave, the enemy, the wife, the infant — unborn or newborn. These were at great risk, as were the four traditional protégés: the poor, the alien, the widow, the orphan. And this fourfold obligation was preached across the full expanse of the church: from Carthage to Egypt and up into Syria, then across Greece and in Rome.

- Second, this was not a program simply for the more strenuous. It was presented as the imperative agenda for the church, the test for all discipleship. Believers were warned away from abortion as they were from adultery, murder, greed, and theft. The four Christian innovations were offered as the the classic new signs of authenticity. If theirs was not a community where Jew and Gentile, man and woman; slave and free could show forth as one, then it failed to be Christian. That was their test.

- Third, though these exhortations show a sensitive and compassionate sympathy for the victims, their principal moral concern is for the oppressors. It is the husband that bullies his wife whose person dwindles even more sadly than hers. The master or mistress who abuses the slave sustains an injury even greater than what the slave experiences. It is the mother who eliminates her son that Clement cares about, because she must destroy her *philanthropia* as well, her love for humankind, in order to do it. The disease of character that follows from

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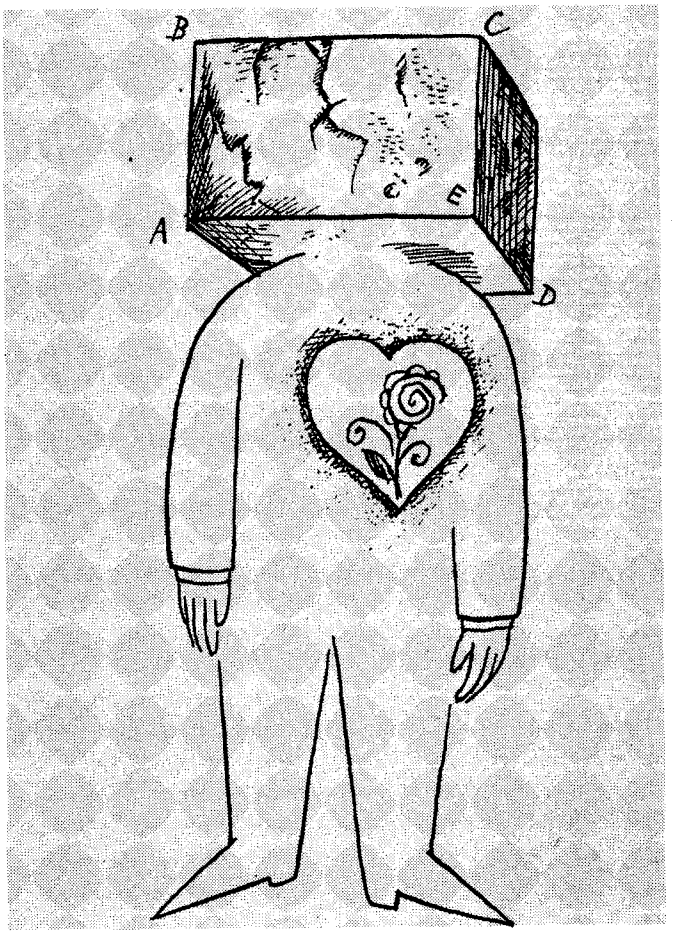

exploitation of others was seen, in Christian perspective, to be more hideously incapacitating than the worst that befell victims. It could be a death far worse than death. Even when they enter the contemporary dispute over the ensoulment of the unborn, these writers dismiss it as a quibble when it comes to abortion: it is the same ruthless willingness to eliminate unwelcome others that shows itself in the slaying of the unborn, the newborn, or the parent. In truest Christian perspective, it is the oppressor who is destroyed.

● Fourth, these writers knew well that any true protection of the helpless and exploited calls for a stable empowerment, so that those same people will not continue to be victimized. This means that the Christian moral agenda demands a price. Oppressors must give up their advantage. It little matters whether the advantage was seized purposefully or inherited unwittingly. There is suffering to be accepted by those in power if the disadvantaged and helpless are to be afforded true protection.

But there is a further sacrifice to be made. The victims must accept suffering as well. The price they must pay—if they are to be Christians—is that they must forgo resentment and hatred. Empowerment cannot be grasped as the means to take revenge or, still worse, as the way to begin to be an exploiter oneself. The victims must gaze directly upon those who have taken advantage of them, and recognize them as brothers and sisters who themselves may have been pressed by distress of one kind or another. So there is no moral accomplishment possible unless reconciliation extends the hand of fellowship across the battleline of suffering. There will be heavy and sometimes bitter things to accept if hatred is to be extinguished, and not merely aimed in a new direction.

● Fifth, we must note that this was a rigorous duty presented to our Christian ancestors. The light was dazzling, and they often preferred to draw back into the cover of darkness. They and we have sinned against that light. Christians continued to relish and even to justify hatred against their enemies. They did not set the slaves free. Women were not welcomed into full and equal status. And parents continued to destroy their young.

Every person interested enough to follow this debate is aware that we live in an extraordinary age. Four great movements have stirred us round the world: (1) a movement for world peace that is more than a weariness of war; it is making bold and positive ventures towards the reduction of enmity and distrust; (2) a movement for the relief of bondage of every sort: freedom from slavery and from racial subjection, dignity for the worker, status for the migrant; (3) a movement for equality of women and a more integrated companionship with men, so that family and work can be humanized for each and for both together; and (4) a movement to rescue the children from abortion, infanticide, infant mortality, and every sort of neglect and predatory danger.

In the trough of some of the most genocidal carnage and oppressive bondage and degradation of women and slaughter of innocent children, our era may be unusual in the readiness of some to listen to that bold and visionary Christian age whose teaching I have held up to your minds and memories.

Each of these movements is bent on empowerment. If the exploited do arise and claim their rightful places, will they take power like Spartacus or Robespierre or Pol Pot? Or will they take power like Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela . . . like Jesus? Christians may make the difference. This fourfold phalanx of conscience on the march is only partly Christian in origin. But I say that Christians will mean much to these movements of grace, and these movements must mean much to us.

We, possibly more than others, must immediately recognize that these various struggles are in alliance with each other. None can be pitted against another. The United States, for instance, must never imagine that enmity between nations will be subdued if our neighbors are in bondage to us. Enslavement and enmity must both vanish. Likewise, the movement of enhancement for women must never be furthered by making their children expendable. In America today abortion is said to resolve a conflict of rights, a conflict of interests between women and their children. A Christian must hold suspect any human right which must be guaranteed by another human's elimination.

Another Christian contribution will be to tell all those who stand to lose power that it is in their highest interest to do so.

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For they have truly withered under the weight of their exploitative advantages. To say this to them with any credibility, we must first be utterly persuaded that oppressors suffer an even more tragic injury than their victims. Are you really ready to believe that the staff of Auschwitz perished in a worse tragedy than those they exterminated? Do you mourn more for the two thousand or so abortionists in America than for the eighteen million or so infants they have efficiently butchered? Were you more dismayed about Bull Connor than about Martin Luther King, Jr.? Only if you do believe that, can you say believably that you care for the mothers who destroy their unborn children, for they stand to lose even more than do their tragically destroyed offspring.

There is another characteristic Christian insight needed in the abortion struggle. We must see and say how often it is that women who victimize their children are themselves handicapped by never having enjoyed control over their own lives. They are victims . . . even though they are victims who destroy others.

How often it is that some helpless group is savaged by aggressors who have themselves been victims. They are survivors of outrage, and they now seek to relieve their stress and suffering by turning on others who are weaker still. Victims exploiting victims.

What is the background of parents who abuse and batter their children? A childhood of violence, incest, contempt. Victims lashing out at victims.

And who are aborting their daughters and sons today? Women and men who are alienated, abused, poor, who are at a loss to manage their own lives or intimacies. Victims destroyed, destroying victims.

Hate them—hate any victimizers—and you are simply cheering on the cycle of abuse and violence. Suppress your rage well enough to look closely and humanely at drug dealers, at rapists, at pathological prison guards, and you may see it there too: the same pathetic look of the battered spirit, preying on others wantonly.

Women who are desperate or autistic enough to destroy their children are among society's most abused victims. We owe them every help. But a truly compassionate support could never invite them to assuage their own anger by exterminating those more helpless still. It is by breaking the savage cycle of violence that victimization is laid to rest.

When you grasp the uplifted hand to prevent one injured person from striking out at another, you must do so in love, not in anger, for you are asking that person to absorb suffering rather than pass it on to another. And, to be a peacemaker, you must be as ready to sustain as you are to restrain. One must be more than just to accept injustice, yet deal out justice.

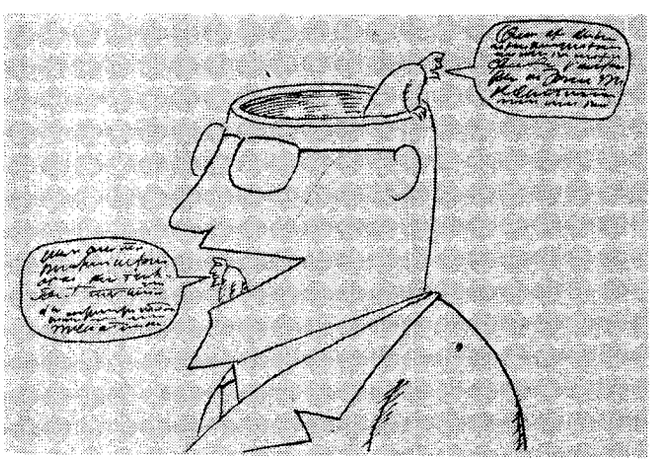
Our belief is in a Lord who was the innocent victim of injustice. Yet he caught the impact of that injustice in his own body, his own self. He deadened it and refused to pass it on; he refused to let the hatred go on ricocheting through humankind. If we truly follow him we are committed to doing the same. And the truest test of that faith is whether we have the gumption to share it with others, with those who are treating others unjustly, but especially with people who are victims. We must prevail upon them to let us help them catch the impact of their distress in their own bodies, and in our own selves alongside theirs, without permitting the cycle of violence to carry on.

The fire of Pentecost rapidly enflamed the Christian community to a sense of what it was about. These Christians were in so many ways an observant Jewish movement: in their worship, their hopes, their moral way of life. But in two great matters they burst forth as men and women possessed by a new Spirit. They witnessed to the Resurrection: Jesus, at whose unjust execution they had been inert and disengaged, was risen to power as Messiah and Lord. That was the first great matter.

The second was like it. They too had been raised to unexpected power, and they stated with vehemence that they would no longer be passive before affliction. That determination was embodied in the entirely distinctive and innovative moral commitment to befriend the enemy, to embrother the slave, to raise up the wife, and to welcome the child. Their own lives were at stake, for these Christians believed that they would perish in their persons if they proved nonchalant about the suffering of any of these most vulnerable brothers and sisters. They rushed to their task, for many others' lives depended on them: the lives of those so powerful they could crush others without noticing; and the lives of their victims—unnoticed, undefended, even unnamed.

The revolt against abortion was no primitive and narrow dogma that a more sophisticated church has now outgrown. It was in the very center of the moral life by which the church first defined itself before the Lord and before the world. We have not yet approached it, and some speak of having surpassed it. Those first disciples who reverenced every unwanted child, born or unborn, would have been stupefied by the sight of their own children in the faith gainsaying this or any of that fourfold commitment. Were we to forswear the hated enemy, the enslaved laborer, the subjected woman, or the defenseless infant, and do that in his name, Christ would have died in vain.

In this debate we are asking whether recent developments



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and reflection give us authentic reasons to reconsider what the *Didache* and Athenagoras and Tertullian and our other ancestors in faith held to be essential. I say to you we have never had more reasons to reconsider their teaching. And I say that their teaching has never rung more defiantly as the prophetic call of Christ.

MAGUIRE

John Courtney Murray used to say that disagreement is a rare achievement. We have achieved it in this debate. Burtchaell finds his position on abortion "in the very center of the moral life by which the church defined itself." The theological record does not support this simplistic contention.

Our differences are primarily methodological. Burtchaell designates the *Didache*, Athenagoras, Tertullian, and others as his "Scripture" since Scripture does not support his position. the difference is not that he goes to these texts and those of us who differ with him do not. The difference is that he finds in these texts what is not there. You cannot extract from words like *teknon* or *trucidatur* a revolution of consciousness on abortion. This kind of text-proofing and ignoring of the *Sitz im Leben* would not be tolerated in biblical exegesis.

What Burtchaell does is not good ethics. He wants to find an ideal in various disparate texts and leap from there to very practical conclusions in ethics that apply transculturally and transtemporally. James Gustafson and others have long warned of this temptation to avoid homework by rushing from perceived ideals to simple conclusions. Aquinas says that "human actions are good or bad according to their circumstances," and that moral life is marked by "*quasi infinitae diversitates*." The tough part of ethics is the circumstantial analysis in which we confront these *diversitates*. Burtchaell would spare us this by claiming to find an ideal that solves all (or almost all) abortion cases for all time.

Moral meaning does not just come from ideals. It is also housed in principles and it is incarnate in the circumstances of flesh and life. The moral decision is born at the interstices of all these sources of moral meaning. Burtchaell purveys a perceived ideal and then rushes to a conclusion that binds all kinds of people in all kinds of circumstances. I find in this approach the seeds of fanaticism. Even the old Penitentials that dominated Catholic thought for centuries were more capable of making distinctions where there are differences. They could allege that adultery was more serious than abortion. They tried for some sense of differentiation in their analysis of reality. Burtchaell fails here.

Burtchaell also assumes, what the Christian tradition did not, that the human embryo is a child, a baby, a person. Fifty-one percent of all abortions are done before the embryo has become a fetus. Even the Vatican, which is not shy in these matters, has not tried to settle the ensoulment question. Burtchaell is more dogmatic than the tradition which recognized doubt and gave the woman the benefit thereof.

Burtchaell would put all abortions, except the ones he approves of, in the category of butchery and murder. That makes forty to fify million women butchers and murderesses every year. That is a sweeping judgment of a huge part of humanity, the feminine part, and the implications of that judgment, as I have said, are sexist.

In his opening statement, Burtchaell said many beautiful things beautifully. At times, I wished I could be entirely on his side. Our paths part when we come to the thorns of conflict situations where I find him guilty of oversimplification. Burtchaell dismisses Probabilism which theologians use to justify some abortions. The *doubt of fact* on embryonic and fetal personhood has been treated as a *doubt of law*; the basic assumptions of Probabilism were used even before the theory was formulated.

In conclusion, I return to my keynote position that neither of us is pro-abortion. We would both like to see conditions which would make abortion less likely. We differ in our sense of the tragic possibility that those conditions are not always present.

BURTCHAELL

Professor Maguire points out that he does not read the Christian record as a constant support for the moral imperative against abortion. He is correct. The record of the church is no more honorable in its pursuit of that early commitment than it is in support of the early commitment to make slaves truly brothers and sisters. Nor would we want to use the history of the church to vindicate its failure to pursue its early insights regarding even companionship between women and men. On the contrary, there has been a great slumbering, denial, turning of the back on these convictions.

Professor Maguire also says that in Utopia abortion would be almost unnecessary. I do not think it is our task to frame ethics for Utopia. Nor do I think that Jesus was asking people to be just only when the world settled down to being just in return. Anyone who agrees to accept injustice without retaliating knows that she or he is not following a utopian ethic. *All* of these characteristically Christian moral imperatives require a readiness to do the good and lifegiving thing because one is determined to *do* justice, not merely because one can count on *receiving* justice.

"Are the many women who have committed abortion evil?" Professor Maguire asks. Are the many men who bullied them into it evil? Are the many men who aborted them evil? Those who have recounted their experiences to me deplore beyond anything else in their entire lives the destruction of their own children. I have known them to have carried this sadness for weeks, months . . . as long as sixty years. It was I who found myself trying to draw them away from the conviction that they must be evil, trying to draw them into a resolve that now they must turn and offer their lives to other helpless

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QUESTION: *What is the difference between the born baby's right to life and the unborn baby's right to life? Where is the dividing line where it suddenly acquires the right to life? If not at birth, then when?*

MAGUIRE: The questioner speaks about the "unborn baby." Again, that is not a fact, but a presumption and one that I contest. I do not consider that most abortions are done to babies. They are done to embryos and pre-personal fetuses. The Vatican admits that we do not know the moment of personhood and then they go on to do *philosophy* on the subject, saying how we should treat the embryo or fetus. They brace their position with philosophical arguments with which we can agree or disagree according to our perceptions. During most of our Christian and Catholic history we did not see things to be as simple as the Vatican would now have them.

I would say that the embryo and fetus weigh more heavily and morally every day and that greater reasons would be needed to terminate them. Such reasons, however, could be present even to the very end of the pregnancy, as we have seen. Life is valuable from the beginning but it exists in the context of conflicting values.

BURTCHAELL: If I may follow on here, what I find troubling with that answer is that personhood then becomes a performance rating. On that view the most "personal" human would probably be the adult taxpayer: someone who does not seem to be a burden upon anyone else. The problem here is that it is not really the status of the potential victims that is determinative. It is the program, project, and purposes of the person in power, the one in a position to eliminate that victim.

people who needed them. It was not I who was pointing the finger at them, but they who seemed to have sensed that people who do evil things to others wither. We all carry around the scars and handicaps and disablements of the advantage we have taken of others from time to time. I think it is entirely specious and sentimental to say: "So many have done it." So many have done a lot of things.

Lastly, I must disallow my opponent's use of Probabilism. Professor Maguire knows very well, for he is a well enough trained professor of ethics, that the tradition which developed the theology of Probabilism absolutely vetoed its use in any matter like abortion. Probabilism says that where there is confusion—legitimate, objective confusion—among good-minded people without a conflict of interest about the requirements of a moral obligation, then you may follow a lenient course except when that more permissive choice might do harm to another, in which case you may not follow a probable opinion but must pursue the safer course. You may not go out and fire off your 30.06 rifle in the woods at every sound behind a bush. Indeed, when there is doubt, and when injury might follow, all benefit of doubt accrues to the potential victim. Therefore the doctrine of Probabilism would say: until the question of personhood of the unborn at various stages is resolved, all benefit of doubt goes to the potential victim.

MAGUIRE

We should not conclude without recognizing that Catholics have special authority problems. Starting in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Vatican came out with a negative absolute position on abortion. It stopped commending us to the "proven and reliable authors" and tried to end theology on abortion by proclaiming that all abortions are objectively immoral. Many Catholics suffer from a fundamentalism of office just as many Protestants suffer from a fundamentalism of the book. This lurks behind the Catholic debate on abortion, making the debate more of an event in ecclesiology than in moral theology. Catholic ecclesiology at its healthiest recognized that the Catholic search for truth rests on a tripod: the hierarchical pod, the *sensus fidelium* pod, and the pod of research theologians. Historically, each of these pods has erred and, at times, each has led in the discovery of moral and religious truth.

Catholic fundamentalism had undue reliance on the hierarchical pod. Such reliance can only be embarrassed by the data of history. Pope Nicholas I condemned judicial torture; Pope Innocent IV imposed it. The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* denied the right to silence; the 1917 Code of Canon Law sanctioned it. Pope Boniface VIII defined that all political power depends on the pope, and Pius XII called this an error conditioned by the times. Pius IX and Gregory XVI condemned religious liberty; Vatican II praised it. At times hierarchical figures have led, but at times they have failed us.

I have mentioned John Connery's fine historical study on abortion which shows Catholic theology approving of a number of direct abortions. After recounting these debates, however, Connery shows how his ecclesiology stops the conversation. He speaks of "the resolution" of the debate on direct abortion and craniotomy; the end came when the Holy Office on July 24, 1895 spoke. Says Connery: "What it was saying practically was that a medical abortion involved direct killing and therefore could not be justified any more than craniotomy or other procedures of this kind. These responses resolved on the level of authentic teaching the controversies . . . ." Contrary opinions, long considered solidly probable, could have value only until such time as "church authority should settle the issue." Probability, however, is based on insight, not on permission. *Roma locuta est*, but if we find deficiencies in what Rome says, *causa non finita est*.

It is also relevant to the abortion debate that we have abandoned the truly ecclesial nature of Protestant Christians. Their witness cannot be ignored on the abortion issue or on anything else.

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QUESTION: *What would be the effect of an antiabortion constitutional amendment in a country where not everyone would support it?*

BURTCHAELL: I feel obliged to give a relatively brief answer, since the legal aspect of abortion is one that we purposely agreed we were not going to address in this debate. The only way you get any constitutional amendment is by having massive political support for it. Now all reliable polls for the last twenty-five years have shown that there has never been a majority of support for the present legal situation which since 1973 permits abortion on demand throughout pregnancy. Yet the polls also show there has not been enough vigor in that dissent to produce an amendment.

MAGUIRE: If you attempted to ban abortions now, the result would be Prohibition II. When an issue is respectably debated, where experts and public opinion are divided, a negative law will not graft onto the body politic. That is why Thomas Aquinas and Augustine advised what we would call the legalization of prostitution. Prostitution was evil, they said, but greater evils would come from trying in their times to outlaw it. Aquinas said that good legislators should imitate God in permitting some evils for a greater good. The debate is between safe legal abortion and unsafe illegal abortion.

BURTCHAELL

For years, Professor Maguire has complained that his fellow Catholics would not give him a public hearing. Now Notre Dame has listened attentively while he spoke his mind. I, for one, am disappointed that he has, after all, so little to say.

We came to debate whether Christians have Christian grounds to turn away from a moral conviction that was one of the most purposeful and conscious commitments by which the earliest church professed its priorities and identity.

My opponent says he does not welcome abortion. There are tragic circumstances, however, when abortion is the only way a woman or a couple can avoid a disastrous outcome from the birth of a child; this he would agree to. He has reviewed the historical record of Catholic moral teaching through the centuries, and concluded that it speaks with too muddled a voice to yield any normative doctrine that could govern our behavior. He has been aggressive in condemning Catholics, both bishops and theologians, who simply reject abortion as immoral. He deplores their rigid refusal— simplistic, arrogant, fanatic, absolutist—to treat a complex issue with ethical nuance. He calls on them to allow for legitimately exceptional cases when abortion might be a conscientious option.

But why, do you suppose, has he been so inexplicit and vague about what those exceptions might be . . . and why they should be exceptions? Why will Professor Maguire never come out and say when abortion *would be* a Christian act? Or when it *would be* immoral?

I will tell you why. He offers no nuances, no distinctions, no principles for discriminating situations when children should be born from situations when they may be eliminated. It is because his position rests on a conviction very distant from those which thoughtful Christians might use to discuss the rightful application of our commitments to other humans.

Professor Maguire's wife, Majorie Reiley Maguire, who has been his closest colleague in the pro-choice effort, has expressed more candidly than he the doctrine that motivates their mutual endeavor. "A woman," she writes, "is not a mother until she accepts a pregnancy and/or gives birth." In a word, if we turn our backs on our offspring they do not exist, or they do not exist as our children. This is, of course, the moral view propounded by the Enlightenment: that we have no obligations except by our own choice. It is not at peace with the moral imperatives of Christ.

The issue we dispute here is whether Christians owe others only such acknowledgment and care as it pleases them to give.

This is no bizarre doctrine. You have heard it expressed by P. W. Botha, president and prime minister of South Africa, who insists that white South Africans have a free choice not to accept black or mixed-race persons as their neighbors, or as their human peers. And so they refuse them all consanguinity or fraternal protection. They do not acknowledge their status as human peers, and so they believe themselves free to dispose of black and brown persons as they please. The stable economy, the lovely countryside, the democratic government would all be devastated if the unwelcome and savage dark folk became part of the people. And so they are unwanted, and have been refused peoplehood. They are non-persons. They are owed nothing because they were never accepted. It is tragic, they do admit, but not immoral, because no one should be obligated to care for someone he or she never accepted as a fellow human. That is Mr. Botha's view.

And Mr. Botha is a Christian man, whose church has had no rigid dogmas to hold up as a rebuke to him on this subject. He and his fellow rulers exercise their freedom of choice in good conscience.

Professor Maguire is pleading for any parent's free choice to disinherit and destroy unwanted children— precisely because they are unwanted. The findings of many theologians have been catalogued: some famous, most of them obscure. But Professor Maguire does not really care what they have said. Constitutional rights, fetal development, ensoulment, personhood: these are all brought up and discussed, but they count for next to nothing. What counts is power: ruthless, arbitrary power—the power to choose who shall live—the power to exact from others whatever one needs to avoid catastrophe.

My opponent argues for abortion on demand. When pressed hard to state when, if ever, he would disapprove of a woman's decision to abort, his response is that he opposes frivolous abortions. This is a nuanced position? This is a refined princi-

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ple to help us make reliable moral decisions in the midst of ambiguity and complexity? Prime Minister Botha, I assume, is against frivolous bondage. And I know many who are against frivolous wars and frivolous chauvinism.

Professor Maguire is a Christian man. His church, however, cannot offer him the comfort that Mr. Botha has received.

As his fellow Catholic, I cannot look into the eyes of Jesus crucified and see the empowerment Professor Maguire describes as what we are called to. It is the freedom to subjugate others at will, not the power to be free by commitment to the service of others according to their needs, rather than our preferences.

THE EDITORS: SIFTING THE ARGUMENTS

Imagine a movie which opens with a shot of a powerful railroad engine moving onto and across the screen from left to right. The next shot shows a similarly powerful train engine charging onto the screen from right to left. With increasing rapidity, the film cuts from one looming, roaring, rushing engine to the other. Cut, cut, cut—the background music swells and races. Tension mounts as it seems the two trains are heading toward a collision. The first engine sweeps onto the single track of a bridge from one direction. The second engine approaches from the other direction. And then the camera pulls way back to show the two trains speeding serenely past one another across two parallel bridges a half-mile apart.

Have we actually viewed such a movie sequence? It seems familiar enough. In any case, the debate between Daniel Maguire and James Burtchaell leaves us with the impression of having viewed it again. Two powerful minds have come charging toward one another from opposite directions—and then unexpectedly crossed paths without collision. They were, it turns out, operating on entirely different tracks.

The problem may have been rooted in the proposition Maguire and Burtchaell were debating, a proposition loaded with ambiguities. It asked whether there were good reasons "to reconsider the virtually total Christian disapproval of abortion." The word "reconsider," it turned out, could be taken in nearly opposing senses. Maguire proposed that the church reconsider, that is, reassess its anti-abortion stance; Burtchaell, on the other hand, urged that "we have never had more reasons to reconsider," that is, reaffirm, what our "ancestors in the faith held to be essential," the obligation to protect the unborn from destruction.

The ambiguity here is magnified when linked to the object of this reconsidering: "the virtually total Christian disapproval of abortion." What the proposition assumes as fact, both debaters, although in different ways, reject. The very core of Daniel Maguire's argument—"the heart of this debate," he calls it—is that, in fact, there has been "no 'clear and constant' teaching on abortion." Burtchaell, interestingly enough, does not directly challenge Maguire's claim on this point, although one senses that he is not endorsing Maguire's historical account either. Burtchaell chooses rather to agree that one cannot "read the Christian record as a constant support for the moral imperative against abortion." For him, however, this does not resolve the matter. The church was also not faithful to its early commitment to a new kind of relationship between slaves and masters, men and women. The fact that "there has been a great slumbering and denial and turning of the back on these convictions" is not at all decisive.

There is a striking reversal of roles in this debate. It is, to begin with, a very Catholic and very theological debate, befitting its venue and the professions of the participants. The legal dimension of the abortion issue was deliberately not addressed, and the philosophical dimension was touched upon but not emphasized. At least superficially, Professor Maguire, although questioning the current official position of the church, argues within a rather traditional framework. He assumes a traditional mind-set in the audience ("Catholics have special authority problems"), pitches his case against the assertions of bishops, and formulates arguments that would be telling in terms of the kinds of claims made by Catholic authorities before the Second Vatican Council no less than after it. It is Maguire who introduces ensoulment, Probabilism, and the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* into the discussion, and quotes Thomas Aquinas in his rebuttal.

Father Burtchaell, on the other hand, although he is supporting a position identified with the institutional church, states his case in terms that are apt these days to be called "prophetic," a word that recurs in his remarks. He is not at all concerned with the later history of the church's moral casuistry that occupies Maguire. Burtchaell wants to call the church back to an original "vigor and vision," to a "point of radical conversion," a conviction that marked "those who were most electrified by the onset of Christian faith."

It is the gap between these two different approaches that leaves the impression of trains roaring by one another without real engagement. Each approach has its own difficulties, and each participant is better at raising them for the other's case than answering them for his own. Maguire questions Burtchaell's history. Citing Connery, Maguire denies that early texts reveal any "Christian revolution" in discontinuity with Jewish views nor any "revolution of consciousness" about abortion "in the very center of the moral life by which the church defined itself." But is history really the point at all? Is the question possibly whether or not we twentieth-century

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Christians should find this extension of life-preservation in the "radical, prophetic imperatives" of Christian faith, regardless of what we can definitively prove about the understanding of the earliest "Jesus people"? Maguire, in any case, does not expand on his rejection of Burtchaell's "proof-texting," and Burtchaell, in any case, does not reply. An important issue is left unresolved.

For his part, Burtchaell raises a question about Maguire's resort to history: does Maguire, in truth, consider this history at all normative? Burtchaell says no: it is only a matter of finding the historical record "too muddled . . . to yield any normative doctrine." As Burtchaell sees it, Maguire's concern with the older exceptions and the newer excesses of church teaching is merely a clearing of the ground for a position that is very distant from Christian thought. "Arguments are being presented on behalf of . . . desperate cases, but the real purpose is to secure freedom of abortion for anyone at any time." Maguire's *positive* norm for evaluating abortion, as distinguished from his negative critique of church teaching, rests on an Enlightenment principle "that we have no obligations except by our own choice." Maguire had no chance to reply to this charge. However, if Maguire's account of the tradition is seen as somehow normative and not just muddled, it consistently seems to reject abortion far more than does the contemporary pro-choice position. What *is* Maguire's norm, then, and what is its Christian derivation?

The objection that Maguire raises to Burtchaell's "prophetic" standpoint is a well-established one, and one with considerable force. "What Burtchaell does is not good ethics. He wants to find an ideal in various disparate texts and leap from there to very practical conclusions in ethics that apply transculturally and transtemporally. . . . Thomas Aquinas says that 'human actions are good or bad according to their circumstances'. . . . The tough part of ethics is the circumstantial analysis. . . . Burtchaell purveys a perceived ideal and then rushes to a conclusion that binds all kinds of people in all kinds of circumstances." "Our paths part," adds Maguire, "when we come to . . . conflict situations."

Burtchaell does not respond to this challenge. On the one hand, he does not seem to deny daunting cases, where heroism is required, but what of conflict situations where not even heroism can forestall terrible consequences, spiritual as well as psychological and material? What of conflicts *among* the various moral imperatives, those inherited from Judaism as well as those extended by the early Christians' radical imperatives—conflicts between the life of the enemy and the life of the sheltered refugee, between the defenseless woman and the unborn child, between the survival of born children and the unborn? Does Burtchaell classify all the church's efforts to balance these imperatives—from Paul's refusal to challenge the institution of slavery itself to Augustine's just war theory and on to later casuistry—as so much falling away from the original moral vision? Would Burtchaell, for example, conclude that the Christian vision of a love encompassing enemies implies absolute pacifism? Are there limits to what the Christian must do for the poor or alien, and how does one balance obligations to them with obligations, say, to one's family? Burtchaell need not accept Maguire's, or anyone else's, specific criteria for "conflict situations" to tell us whether or not he sees *some areas* of indeterminacy in moving from his fundamental moral conviction to specific cases.

This debate, we pointed out, was very Catholic and theological. It was not, however, very *philosophical*. Can the morality of abortion, even the moral theology of abortion, be debated without reference to the philosophical arguments that have frequently played so large a part in both the church's and society's thinking on the subject? Burtchaell equates the obligations Christians have toward the unborn at every stage with those we have toward infants or adults. The texts he cites, while clearly opposed to abortion, are not as clear on this equation between unborn and born. Maguire protests that Burtchaell "assumes, what the Christian tradition did not, that the human embryo is a child, a baby, a person." And if there are indeed "conflict situations," doesn't it matter precisely what is the nature of the entities in conflict, and can we resolve that question on the basis (again) of texts? Must we not turn to philosophical reflection?

At several points, Maguire raises the question of the moral status of the embryo/fetus. He refers to theories of delayed animation and ensoulment, suggesting that they have a continuing philosophical import even if their earlier biological basis has been undermined. Maguire also wields the concept of "personhood," to which Burtchaell objects. But does the potential abuse of the term "personhood" invalidate the concept itself? Having characterized all differences between, say, an embryo and an adult taxpayer as a matter of "performance rating," Burtchaell asserts, "I see no grounds for denying that any live human being is a person." Maguire complains of the analogies ("noxious and insulting") that equate living individuals, "especially Jewish people and other victims . . . to blastocysts, embryos, and fetuses." Burtchaell does not employ here "Holocaust imagery," but he is apparently unpersuaded by the underlying complaint about such analogies, as evidenced by his comparison of aborted fetuses to the victims of apartheid.

BURTCHAELL (replying to a question on "personhood"): It is a very recent maneuver to try to separate the notion of "person" from that of "living human being." If a movement undertakes to eliminate or subjugate unwanted human beings, it must find some way to depersonalize them. We can do it by calling others by epithets, like "gooks," "slopes," or "vermin," as was done in the Vietnamese war. It is a similar strategy to say that a human being must have achieved a certain effective measure of performance in order to be granted acknowledgment as a person, and therefore protected by law. That, in my opinion, is simply a semantic way of destroying the weak.

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It would seem then that Maguire, more than Burtchaell, looks to philosophical reasoning to provide an essential substratum for theological exploration of the obligations Christians owe unborn human beings. Yet again it is not clear whether Maguire himself holds that any of these philosophical arguments are compelling, or *especially* compelling for Christians. Early on, Maguire emphasizes the difference between "a *philosophical* plank" (his italics) and "a given of faith." Later, he stresses that the Vatican covers its uncertainty about "the moment of personhood" by going on to do *philosophy* on the subject. Rome "braces its position with philosophical arguments with which we can agree or disagree according to our perceptions." Do these philosophical references function to ground a moral theological position or rather to suggest that the ground beneath any position is shaky? Maguire states, "I would say that the embryo and fetus weigh more heavily and morally every day [of their development] and that greater reasons would be needed to terminate them. Such reasons, however, could be present even to the very end of the pregnancy." He does not explain the basis of this conclusion, nor how it is related to the sort of philosophical arguments Catholic moralists have customarily mounted.

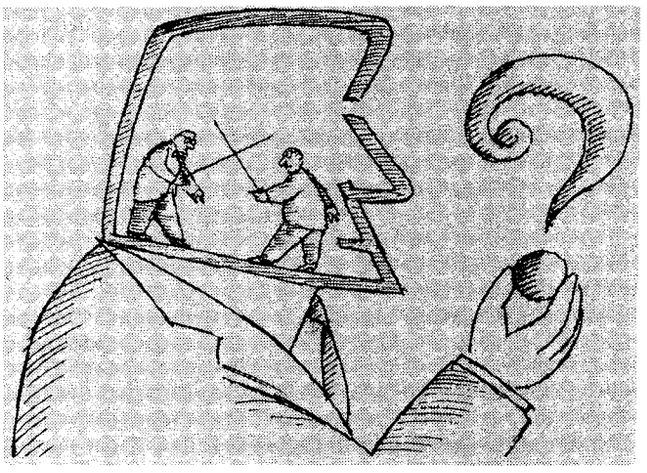
These then are the questions remaining:

1. Who is right about the testimony of the early church? And is the meaning one puts on that testimony really going to emerge from the documents themselves or from a more general vision about Jesus' revelation, the character of the community of his disciples, and the nature of ethics? What of the later history?

2. What are Maguire's positive norms for evaluating abortions, as distinguished from his critique of the "negative absolutists"? Does his position differ from Burtchaell's closing characterization of it?

3. Does Burtchaell's approach, on the other hand, deserve Maguire's judgment that it "is not good ethics"—because it invokes large ideals without taking account of specific circumstances or "conflict situations"?

4. Finally, is this a debate that can be pursued without considerably more attention to philosophical reflection on the moral status of the unborn human?



MAGUIRE

Commonweal is right. Our trains did not collide. But the reason was that they could not, for Burtchaell's train was made of shadows and my exercise in Catholic moral theology passed through it unengaged. *Commonweal* is right again in raising questions about Burtchaell's use of philosophy, history, and the tools of moral theology to make his case. His untrain is a curious figment. With a wraith-like immunity to the canons of scholarship, Burtchaell, in a great feat of exogesis, looks "into the eyes of Jesus crucified," repairs to disparate and scarce patristic references to abortion, and finds there, in zygote form, his own peculiar views on the subject. "Prophecy" should be made of sterner stuff. His pietistic intuitionism needs no theological method, no textual criticism, no sense of historical conditioning, no ecumenism, no fellowship with philosophers or Christian or Jewish theologians. Undergirding this unique approach is a ridiculous host of false analogies and false characterizations along with a buoyant innocence of complexity and ignorance of the state of the question in moral theology. Who could collide with that?

First to the deficiencies of Burtchaell's effort and then to the questions raised by *Commonweal*'s commentary. Burtchaell's knowledge of moral theology is arrested at the level of his old seminary textbooks. All those textbooks told us that you could not use Probabilism to shoot into the bush on the grounds that it is probably a turkey in there even though it might just as well be another hunter. This is irrelevant to the case at hand. In a prospective abortion, we know exactly what is in the womb; it is an embryo or a fetus and we know its measurements, location, and often, its genetic condition. What is in doubt is its personhood and even before the terminology was developed in the history of Probabilism, Catholic theologians treated this as the equivalent of a doubt of law opening the way to probabilistic justifications of some abortions. Burtchaell would excommunicate such moderate views as beyond the pale within which "thoughtful Christians" dwell. If any abortions are allowed beyond the whole class which he himself condones, "Christ would have died in vain." Come, come! Such unscholarly bombast does no justice to the position Burtchaell would defend.

Burtchaell stands outside contemporary or historical moral theology. He apparently experienced no scholarly need even to know my work before debating me and caricaturing my method. He says (quoting from I know not where) that my position is to oppose only frivolous abortions. He indicts me for offering no "refined principle to help us make reliable moral decisions in the midst of ambiguity and complexity." If he were but to check his university library, he would find that I have written, among other things, a 477-page book, *The Moral Choice*, to offer a method for making "reliable moral decisions in the midst of ambiguity and complexity." That book offers not just "a principle" which Burtchaell thinks adequate

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for doing ethics, but a full method for addressing complex and ambiguous moral questions. That, of course, would include abortion. (I should, it is true, rejoice that in this solitary sentence, Burtchaell evinces some recognition that abortion might involve "ambiguity and complexity." Throughout, he seemed to proclaim that his gnostic reading of scattered patristic texts spared us all the fuss and bother of ambiguity and complexity.) No reviewer ever suggested that my ethical method was reducible to the avoidance of frivolousness. My method presses us to ponder all the empirical variables including viable alternatives and foreseeable effects; to attend to principles, authorities, creative discovery, and religious traditions; to use reason and to listen to the affective appreciation arising from unique and communal experience; to develop a sense of historical and contextual sensitivity. Such a searching method could lead to positive or negative judgments on particular corporate mergers, medical experiments, killings in self-defense, and abortions. It could not lead to a *laissez faire* ethics. Burtchaell's uninformed characterization of my position is silly. My position on abortion is my method, applied case by case, making distinctions where there are differences.

But there are problems beyond Burtchaell's illiteracy in moral theology. He seems to feel that ethics is done by generic classification, by finding a rubric or principle that bans or approves whole classes of actions. He longs for an ethics by formula. Indeed, he practices this himself. Thus, direct abortions to save the woman when the fetus would die anyhow are morally fine. All other abortions, even the ones he doesn't know about, are done by murderous, exploiting, autistic, morally withered women who are "at a loss to manage their own lives or intimacies" but whom we must nobly try to love as we do "drug dealers, rapists, and pathological prison guards." No discerning method could be so confident in generalization or so replete with *horror feminae*.

Whatever your topic, you do have to cope with the moral differences that are uncovered in circumstantial analysis. Practical moral principles store wisdom on what is generally good or bad, but it is of their nature to have limited applicability. Thomas Aquinas said that the more you take such principles into the particularities of life, the more do they experience *defectus*. Both good principles and good exceptions are grounded in "right reason." We cannot just do ethics by amassing groupings of do's and don't's as Burtchaell is set on doing. Moralists do define certain obvious classes of wrongful activity (such as nuclear war, rape, the torture of children) as "negative absolutes." Certain moral "isms" are presented in purely negative terms: sexism, racism, militarism. But this is different from Burtchaell's empirically bereft analysis which achieves its two tidy groupings of good abortions and bad abortions by decontextualized exegetical wizardry.

This approach does free up Burtchaell to bypass ethics and devote himself wholeheartedly to the creation of false analogies. At this latter work, I must admit, he displays a special, if invidious, talent.

Before I got to Notre Dame, Burtchaell announced in a university press release that it was right that I should come there since Notre Dame had had George Wallace, when he was fighting civil rights, and William Schockley, when he was defending the genetic base for racism. Thus the high tone was set. But, ah, the analogies that awaited me. Not having excused myself from his other writings, I already knew he compared his adversaries on abortion to the Nazi criminals of the Holocaust and to slavers. Now I found myself grouped with Mr. Botha, Bull Connor, Spartacus, Robespierre, and Pol Pot, not to mention the bombardiers in the Vietnamese war. For Burtchaell, those who oppose his pontifical position are moral kin to opponents of sanctuary for Central American refugees and to those who neglect the poor, ply apartheid, or expose their infants. Such false analogies and *non sequiturs* are grist for any freshman logic course.

Of course, if you accept Burtchaell's simplistic Christian moral creed, in which all matters are equally weighted (peace, liberation, reconciliation, and Burtchaell's view on abortion), all of this makes some sense. If, however, you suspect that Burtchaell's view of abortion does not have the status of dogma, then his analogies are simply funny in an obnoxious sort of way.

Commonweal asks me about the normative value of the Catholic tradition, about the Christian assumptions in this debate, and about the role of philosophy in discussing abortion.

I find company and comfort in the Catholic tradition on abortion. Are the historical Catholic positions on abortion normative? Not all of them, clearly, since they contradict one another. The Catholic tradition on this issue has strengths, nuance, and weakness. I embrace the strength and nuance and reject the weakness. Among the Catholic strengths that can be profitably mined: (1) the long tradition of delayed animation which gave different moral status to early or late abortions; (2) conceding to the woman in these conflict situations the *jus potius* (a preferential right); (3) treating the personhood (ensoulment) of the early fetus as a "doubt of law" with the benefit of doubt going to the woman; (4) experimenting with categories such as "materially unjust aggressor" to place the burden of proof on the fetus, rather than on the woman in a conflict situation; (5) stressing the role of reason and the affective and experiential in moral discernment; (6) acknowledging the moral import of circumstances and the limited applicability of moral principles; (7) Probabilism with its reliance on the *insight* of prudent and learned experts, and not just on church officers; (8) reliance on the "sense of the faithful" to discern truth in theological questions; (9) and finally in this incomplete listing, a sound distinction between political and personal ethics.

Let me pause a moment on this last point: Augustine and Thomas Aquinas taught that a Christian prince or legislator could permit prostitution to continue even while finding it personally offensive since greater evils would result from banning it. The *common good* consideration was crucial in this

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thinking. In this vein, a modern Catholic legislator who found all abortions wrong could support *Roe v. Wade* because of the prudently predictable tragedies from illegal and unsupervised abortions. Add to this kind of Catholic thinking Probabilism's principle that "where there is freedom," and you can argue that when an issue is respectably debated (defended by reputable authorities and sound reasons) a negative law will not graft onto the body politic and will do more harm than good. There is a lot more sense in the Catholic tradition than there is in twentieth-century Vatican theology, which I find in many respects a caricature of a rich and variegated tradition.

Beyond what I have already said, I would offer, summarily, two Judeo-Christian principles for the abortion debate. First, sow in justice to reap peace. Women with unwanted and problem pregnancies are not the beneficiaries of peace. We should fight the injustices that are often conducive to the onset of such pregnancies. This principle rejects a micro-vision of an abortion; it is attentive to the macro-evils of social and distributive injustice some of which I listed above.

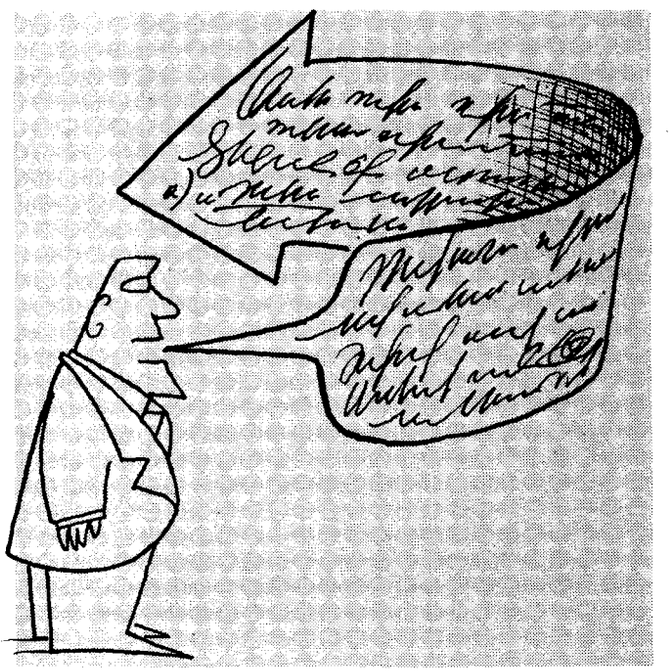
Second, no decision for abortion should be made that is not pro-life since our biblical tradition affirms the goodness of life and the *sanctity* of *personal* life. Life is a web of interconnecting values and the negation which is abortion is justified only when it promotes life in its complex reality and balance. In an example that should be obvious, the poor woman who chooses abortion because she cannot feed adequately the children she already has is making a pro-life decision. Affirming life is not always simple. The life that is good bears the mark of the tragic and the affirmation of life may entail negation. The long Catholic tradition did not miss that, even in regards to abortion in a number of life situations.

In two places, *Commonweal* seems to hanker for a Christian solution to abortion by the essentialist route of ethics by formula. In a way that is close to Burtchaell, they wonder whether from the "radical, prophetic imperatives of Christian faith," or from the "more general vision about Jesus' revelation," or from "the character of the community of his disciples," comes our answer. In other words, can we crack the kernel of early Christian idealism and community and find our formula for all or many classes of abortion? I see this as methodologically misconceived. Biblical religion, first of all, does not contain the solution to the *factual* question of the time of ensoulment or personhood. Secondly, it does not substitute for the multiple chores of normative ethics. It would indeed motivate us to work to spare women the pain of unwanted pregnancy and abortion, but the tradition cannot be forcibly transformed into a denial of the morality of abortions that are commended by reason. A complex issue like abortion will not be solved by a bounding leap from creed to conclusion. We must take our creed through the intricate terrain of ethics to arrive at moral choice.

And what of philosophy's role? Philosophy and theology are not adequately distinct, and thus I have already been speaking of the role of philosophy. I add only that the most important philosophical point I have made is on the necessity of listening to women on abortion in a systematic way. Herein lies a philosophical revolution in the realm of epistemology. Single gender epistemology, as Carol Gilligan has shown on precisely this issue, is partial.

BURTCHAELL

Commonweal's editors discern three issues implicit in our debate that require more direct attention. One is historical: How is one to adjudicate between two such divergent accounts of earlier Christian attitudes towards abortion? One is theological: How does a general moral repudiation of abortion convert into specific norms for conduct? And one is



philosophical: What can reason tell us about the status of the unborn?

The primary font of moral wisdom in the Christian community is inspired insight into experience. Take the recognition of sainthood as an example. One might mistakenly suppose that the church has an analytic checklist of the qualifications required for sanctity, against which it examines the recorded lives of the candidates: certain virtues, a rigorous consistency of character, the potency of miracles, and the like. In actuality, our process is the reverse of that. We have beheld saints: we have seen them with our eyes and touched them with our hands and heard them with our ears and been awestruck at their luminous likeness to Jesus. Only after beholding them did we begin to reflect on what we saw and recognized. That reflection eventually led to the description which later authorities use to verify sanctity in others who will come along. But if you

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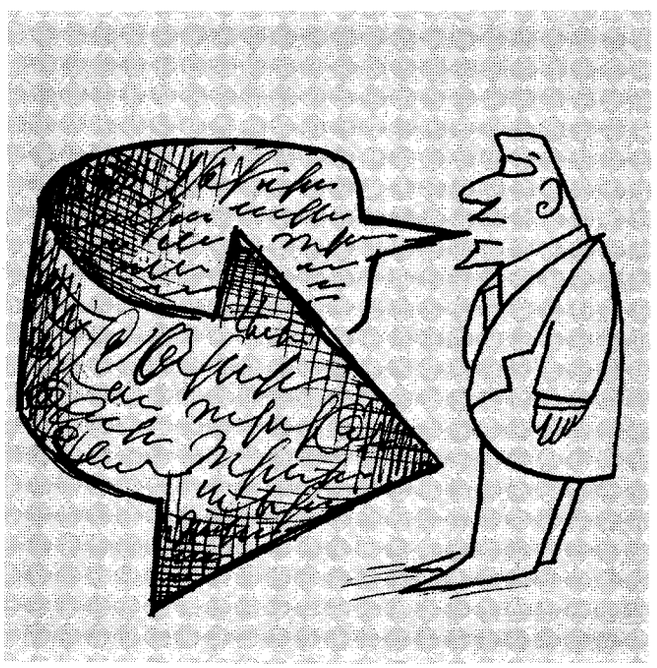
have seen a saint, and are a believer yourself, you should know her for a saint. It may take you some time and some care to portray her adequately. But your knowledge of what a saint is comes from your exposure to that person and to her intense dedication, not to theological treatises or sociological surveys.

It is the same with sin. We do not know that someone who lies is sinning because lying is listed authoritatively as a sin. We have seen what lying does to people, and thus we know that it is deadly.

When the abolitionists rose up against slavery it was not a conclusion they arrived at by reading some book, and they certainly did not gain their conviction from an unbroken consensus of Christian theologians of the past. One day they looked up with clearer eyes than ever before, and they saw what kind of people slaveowners had become. It was evil in their eyes. Then they started to put together arguments about why slaveholding was so wrong. But they had smelt the evil



before they framed those arguments. Their arguments may have rationally analyzed the evil, but it was their direct insight that preceded and directed the course of their reasoning, just as our knowledge of drunkenness antedated the breathalyzer test.

The Catholic social movement in support of the dignity and organization of labor did not arise from economic studies or applications of employment theory or deduction from the Gospel. It started one day when an honest but desperate worker got clubbed on a picket line, and felt all the vileness of it. He knew where sin lay, and where justice lay. He knew it because of the knob on his head and the Spirit in his spirit.

It was not inevitable that he arrive at moral insight. History reminds us that we are insensitive and prejudiced in our moral vision, often blinded by convention and prejudice. Most of us are in fact likely to mistake the unconventional villain if his sin is common enough. It is the prophet among us who is inspired to see through that and to shout out the truth. And then we can all turn in his direction and take a second look and perhaps see what the prophet was first to see. The prophet and the church alternate, as soloist and chorus.

The editors have depicted my presentation of the ancient horror and repudiation of abortion by the first Christians as "prophetic." Exactly. There was an abundance of prophetic insight in the founding Christian communities. When they found abortion sinful it was because they had looked in the eyes of men and women who had done it, and seen death there.

Prophetic insight can spread through the believing community like a forest fire. Its flame can smolder down the centuries and then blaze out again. That is why Christians have inveterately reverenced the archival record of past belief. Our tradition is normative for us. Not all of it, but those surges of inspired revelation, those prophetic torches amid the fog and storm.

The editors may then ask, how are we to share in these moral insights, if we must sort out what is authentic and inspired from what was glib and shortsighted? To the point at hand, how decide between the Maguire and the Burtchaell reconstructions of the Catholic tradition?

Our accounts differ, obviously, in method. My opponent has thumbed through and excerpted the historical survey published by John Connery; I have worked from primary sources. I leave it to Father Connery to tell us whether his anthology has been used as a sourcebook or as a garage sale.

The difference runs much deeper, however. Professor Maguire is appealing to a procedural rule of the scholastic period in Catholic moral theology, when it was held that a body of respectable dissent could cast into doubt certain moral obligations on which there had been a firm and settled consensus. He has rummaged through history, cited miscellaneous exceptions to the continuing revulsion towards abortion, and concluded that the church's past doctrine is not unanimous or unqualified enough to impose itself on our consciences today.

If one is guided by procedural rules alone, such as that which Professor Maguire follows, there is probably enough dissent scattered on the pages of the past to neutralize any Christian tenet or commitment you might choose.

But the inspired insights of the past are reliably accessible only to those who are alive with the same Spirit as were the prophetic folk who came to the truth in the first place, and who take an active, not a passive, stance towards the past. The antiphonal exchange between past and present resembles that between prophet and community. The source of those ancient insights was experiential, and one way we verify which are of God and which are wayward is to compare them to our own experiences.

When the community of the present is told by its ancestors that abortion is a merciless sin, we do not simply take it on their word. We go out ourselves and look in the eyes and consciences of those who have known abortion as the work of their own hands: both those who accept it and those who have deplored it. We listen to their accounts of what it is they have done; we sit beside them in their grief or we listen sharply

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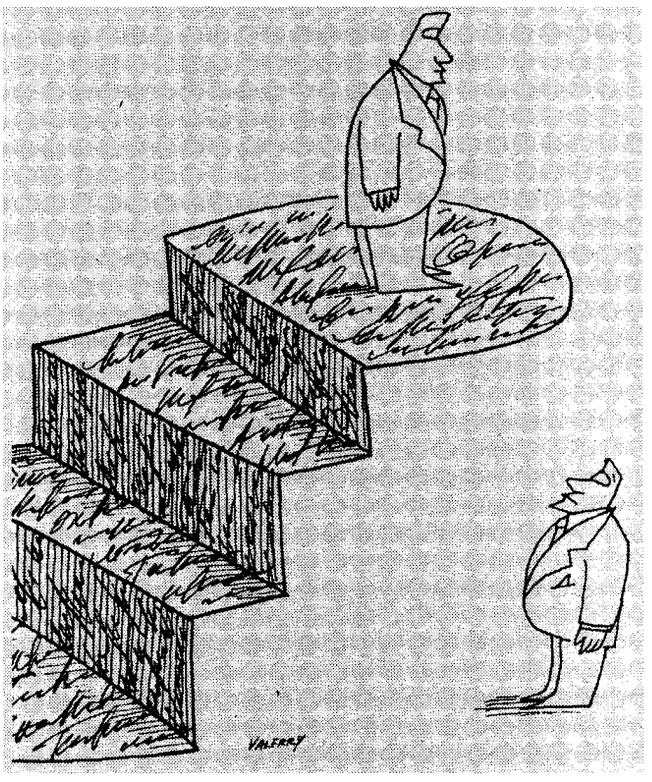
when they explain what it was their right to do. As a community possessed of the Spirit who spoke through the prophets, we look at what they saw. If we receive tradition passively, all we have is hearsay. If we interact dynamically and fasten our gaze intently and see what the ancients saw, then we do not merely report what they said. We touch for it ourselves.

I have presented the original texts and contexts of the Christian statements on abortion in the first two centuries. It is my claim that they embody an insight that is authentic and integral to their Christian commitment. It came to them from experience, not analysis, that abortion was one of the more odious ways to take advantage of the unprotected. It was wretched.

I have seen it for myself as well, and I am joined by an impassioned company of the Christian church which mourns their young dead, and struggles to raise their slayers from a death of their own.

How, the editors then ask, convert this prophetic insight into workable instructions for behavior? Granted that abortion is generally evil, under what specific conditions might it be tolerable? Here too I would point out that insight into moral complexities comes from experience. The difference between gluttony and a weight problem is something you can discern by seeing the moral difference between people who are afflicted by each. Like the moral difference between a joke and fraud. Or between premeditated murder and reckless homicide. Or between discipline and chihld abuse.

Now why has the Christian tradition not vouched for significant moral distinctions between abortion for convenience and, say, abortion to eliminate a handicapped offspring? Because those who knew and cared for men and women who had performed both kinds of abortion observed there was precious little difference in ruthlessness, little variation in its destruction of character, between the two. Both were eliminating another human because he or she was undesirable, or undesired.



Our forerunners in faith have not taught us to detect any significant ethical difference between genocide for convenience or genocide after provocation. The tradition has not used moral finesse to ascertain when proper exceptions could be made in the prohibition of anti-Semitism. Abortion too is one of those acts which circumstances do little to defang.

Here I must say a word about the common claim that abortion would be morally acceptable when the mother is presented with only two alternatives: to save her own life at the cost of her child's survival, or to preserve her child but perish herself. This is an impossible situation: not because it presents anguishing moral choices, but because it cannot occur. In the very rare instance when a pregnancy does seem to be a threat to the mother's survival, the unborn is either developed to the point of being able to survive outside the womb, or it is too young to be viable. In the former case, the child need not be aborted, but only delivered, to save the mother. In the latter case the pregnancy is a threat, not to the life of the mother, but to the lives of both mother and child together, since if the former perishes the latter cannot survive. No matter which course be followed, the child is doomed by circumstance, not by human choice. In this one situation, when it is not human choice that imposes the death of the unborn, I would see abortion as a moral decision that is consistent with the call of Jesus and the moral survival of our consciences. It is the only circumstance in which I can countenance abortion as compatible with the prophetic tradition of our people.

And now we face the third issue raised by the editors: the philosophical issue of the status of the unborn. What of abortion because the unborn is so negligible, so undeveloped, so little advanced through life's course, so unpossessed of the powers and accomplishments of adults? The Christian tradition has not ignored or denied the issue; it has simply beheld that it is not the point. What has experience been telling of those who reckon these unborn to be unhuman and impersonal? Why has the tradition of discriminating moral judgment yielded no allowance of abortion due to the imperfect status of the unborn? It is because those who look into the eyes of the aborters see that the status of the unborn has really made very little difference to them. The status of the victim — the only status that counts — is not that they are impersonal but that they are unwanted.

Professor Maguire's reading of Christian history does not reach out to meet and to respond to its prophetic conscience. I appeal to the inspired sight of the first believers and to the matching insight it has aroused in the mind of the church in our day. What they have helped us to see is that we have nothing better to do with our lives than to shelter those whom circumstance has placed at the mercy of our hospitality.

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Always playing to the audience

REAGAN'S AMERICA
INNOCENTS AT HOME
Garry Wills
Doubleday, $19.95, 388 pp.

William V. Shannon

In the seventh year of Ronald Reagan's reign, as his political power irretrievably crumbles away, we at last have a comprehensive and penetrating explanation of his extraordinary success. Although Garry Wills completed *Reagan's America* before the Iran-*contra* affair broke, — indeed, the book was published early in 1987 — his portrait of the president makes this scandal readily understandable. Wills offers the reader a brilliant display of cultural criticism, political analysis, and biographical insight. This is a book that will last.

Wills is a prolific and intellectually ambitious author who ranges across history, religion, and contemporary politics. This is his fifteenth book. I have not read all fifteen but I can say that this is the best of his three books on recent presidents. *The Kennedy Imprisonment* was shallow and tendentious, while in *Nixon Agonistes* Wills often labored to give complex meanings to a man and to events that were self-evidently evil or simply mean. In Reagan, however, he has found a cultural and political figure who justifies his voracious interest in social history and cultural analysis.

Reagan deserves this kind of full-length treatment because he is a genuinely baffling figure to supporters as well as enemies. He is so intellectually empty and so indolent that it is hard to account for his astonishingly durable success by any conventional criteria, yet his popularity and political effectiveness are undeniable. Wills succeeds in putting Reagan into context.

He reconstructs Reagan's boyhood in Dixon, Illinois, his father's salesmanship and Rotarian optimism, his mother's interest in the theater, and the family's active membership in the Disciples of Christ church. Reagan grew up a devoted son and loyal brother. He helped his brother get jobs and moved his parents to California three months after he began his movie career. While growing up, he also acquired a placid self-confidence and a firm set of moral values. Others might regard those values as faulty but they made him a serene optimist who rarely experiences guilt or conflict.

Reagan began his career as a radio announcer and a sportswriter, doing a column in the highly-colored style of his hero, Grantland Rice. As a broadcaster for a Des Moines radio station, he became regionally famous for his skill in "re-creating" baseball games. On the basis of cryptic information provided by a Western Union wire, he described the game in vivid and extensive detail. Many radio broadcasters around the country in the 1930s and 1940s followed this practice. On one occasion, the wire went dead and for nearly seven minutes, Reagan invented foul balls and other "action" to fill in the time until the wire resumed.

Wills writes:

> If one did not understand that there was no deception involved, Reagan's account of his famous dead-wire incident could mislead. . . . Why is it so important that the audience not know that the line had gone dead? Because they would find that Reagan was not actually at the game?
>
> They knew he was not there. They glorified in the fact. His skill at "visualizing" was praised in the papers. People were invited to the Crystal Palace at the Iowa Fair Grounds to watch him as he invented the game from scraps of paper. There was a complicity in make-believe. What Reagan feared when the line went dead was, at one level, a simple matter of professional pride. . . . But the deeper concern was for what gave rise to those skills, the demand for illusion in the first place. . . .
>
> All those involved knew they were pretending — as we know that the actor onstage is not Hamlet; but we do not want him to stop in mid-performance and remind us of that. We want to finish the dream, though we know it is only a dream.
>
> Reagan was attuned to his audience's needs. That was the condition of his success. He addressed them in the *name* of a reality (there *was* a ball game being played somewhere), but of a reality about which nice discriminations were not to be made. The real game "went warrant" for the imaginary one, without guaranteeing any of its lively detail. . . . Thus, there was an ambiguity about the real built into Reagan's professional life from the outset.

Here we see the origins of the habits that have led Reagan in the White House to make startling errors of fact and yet be forgiven them. He is successful because he does not deal in facts; he deals in emotional truths. Like all good storytellers, he embroiders the facts and sometimes invents them. As long as his listeners find the story interesting and credible, they do not worry about the details.

Wills makes clear three major reasons for Reagan's success. Rather than a

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B-actor, that is, a mediocrity, Reagan was a star performer in Hollywood and is very good at what he does. In 1946, he was among the dozen highest-paid actors and actresses in Hollywood. If he had never entered politics, he would be a significant, second-rank figure in the history of radio, of movies, and of television, having achieved success in all three of these media. From the controlled fantasies of his baseball announcing to the make-believe of Hollywood studios, to his work as host of the "General Electric Theater" and later "Death Valley Days," Reagan developed an acute sense of the basic emotions of audiences and of the best techniques for reaching them.

Secondly, Reagan has always been a company man. He adopted almost every boss he ever had from Peter MacArthur, who managed a radio station in Davenport, Iowa, to Jack Warner of Warner Brothers and Ralph Cordiner of General Electric, as substitute fathers. He never changed his agent. He saw his work as president of the Screen Actors Guild not as economic militancy by unionized workers but as *noblesse oblige* by Hollywood stars trying to help the extras and the bit players. He signed sweetheart contracts with producers on behalf of the Guild. Unlike many stars, he never aspired to be a director. He always knew his lines, took direction easily, and was a cooperative team man.

Translated into politics, these personal qualities enabled Reagan, notwithstanding his fierce rhetoric about creative individualism and the evils of statism, to preside amiably over large bureaucracies in Sacramento and Washington. He believes in delegation, cooperation, team work. He does not interfere beyond his self-defined province. What is that province?

Reagan is not chairman of the board in the corporate sense. In the business world, a chairman delegates executive authority but he has good lines of communication that tell him what is going on in the different divisions. Reagan is often oblivious to what his cabinet chiefs are doing on major problems.

Nor is he simply an "image" manipulated by others. Those who have tried to

(Continued on page 684)

RELIGIOUS BOOKNOTES

Women, religion, & utopia

Mary Gerhart

What's in a name? Sometimes a great deal. The distinction between sexuality (now understood as those physical features having to do with human reproduction that are relatively invariant across cultures) and gender (understood as all other features related to sexuality that are relatively variable across cultures) is one that is crucial. How we understand the difference between sex and gender in turn can give us new access to understanding the communal dimension of religion.

Do symbols reflect societal ideals or do symbols shape the ideals? The answer, as given by anthropologists and sociologists, is that symbols act as both models of and models for society. Caroline Walker Bynum's introduction to *Gender and Symbol: On the Complexity of Symbols* pushes this view of symbol further by calling attention to the rooting of symbol in primordial experience (for example, the experience of water) and the pointing of symbol beyond its immediate and multiple significances (water, for example, may signify purification, destruction, or quenching). Those interested primarily in Christian imagery will find Walker Bynum's essay, on female imagery in the religious writing of the late Middle Ages invaluable for its analysis of the different ways men and women used feminine imagery. The essays, written by the faculty of the Comparative Religion Program at the University of Washington, also exemplify the value of a cross-disciplinary approach to religious phenomena.

***Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols**, ed. by Caroline Walker Bynum, Stevan Harrell, and Paula Richman, Beacon Press, $25.00, 326 pp.*

Some would exclude the issues of gender and sex in religious discussions because the terms are ideological while others argue for inclusion on the grounds that every issue is ideological. Either position is meaningless, however, without a good understanding of ideology. Paul Ricoeur has given us an amazingly rich study of the concept in his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. He sets the concepts ideology and utopia in different relationships with each other, e.g., as opposed, as correlative, as incongruent with the status quo, as pathological, and as constitutive of social reality.

Ricoeur calls upon Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Karl Mannheim, Max Weber, Jürgen Habermas, Clifford Geertz, and others to develop what is probably the most comprehensive philosophical treatment of the subjects to date. The relation between religion and the two concepts is explored at length (some 100 index entries). References to sexuality are few (4 entries), but it is not difficult to see the implications of his study for sexuality through related subjects, such as those of power and politics. Indeed, in his chapter on Louis Saint-Simon, Ricoeur sees authority as a central problem for both utopia

***Lectures on Ideology and Utopia**, by Paul Ricoeur, ed. by George H. Taylor, Columbia University Press, $35.00, 353 pp.*

MARY GERHART *teaches hermeneutics, religion and literature at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York. She co- authored* (with Allen Russell) *Metaphoric Process* (Texas Christian U.).

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and ideology: "ideology is the surplus-value added to the lack of belief in authority, utopia is what unmasks the surplus-value." Ricoeur marvels that power seldom reveals its own history. It tends rather to repeat itself. Such reflections bear important implications for women and men in relation to institutional religion.

Both ideology and utopia have symbolic functions in reality and invite us to reinvestigate the uncon-

***The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine**, by Christine Downing, Crossroad, $9.95 paper, 250 pp.*

scious, or as Christine Downing says, the imaging of "who we are and what we might become." In her *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*, Downing gives an account of what it means to "attend to" myth as a way of giving voice and vision to the unconscious. The book is inspired simultaneously by Jungian theory and by the realization that all theory is to some degree inadequate to explain reality. Downing assumes identities, based in transference theory, of herself and goddesses Persephone, Ariadne, Hera, Pallas Athene, Gaia, Artemis, and Aphrodite (in that sequence). Although tradition presents these goddesses as feminine, earlier tradition, according to Downing, imagined them as parthogenetic and androgynous — a unity of masculine and feminine, of cruelty and kindness, of life and death. Downing states that, by recognizing the "universal dimensions" of one's experiences, one is freed from "a purely personal relation to them." In the last chapter, she explores the role of the child goddess who, by being recognized in us, keeps us imagining.

Katherine K. Young's introduction to *Women in World Religions* deserves to become a classic. Her essay recalls the ambitious scope of Robert Bellah's classic essay on "The Evolution of Religion." Its theoretical scheme, however, is more nuanced by the inclusion of historical and social differences within (as well as among) the world religions. Young defines world religions as "primarily the major religions . . . and secondarily the tribal religions." Young also notices progress in scholarship on women and religion, and the essays reflect that progress in their treatment of history. Contributors include Rosemary Ruether (Christianity), Rita Gross (tribal religions), Katherine Young (Hinduism), Nancy Schusta Barnes (Buddhism), Theresa Kelleher (Confucianism), Barbara Reed (Taoism), Denise L. Carmody (Judaism), and Jane Smith (Islam). The authors render the religious dimension of unfamiliar rituals plausible and, within the bounds of social-cultural analysis, intelligible. All who are interested in religion owe it to themselves to read this book.

***Women in World Religions**, ed. by Arvind Sharma, State University of New York, $34.50, $10.95 paper, 302 pp.*

One of the most recent developments in feminist theology is the application to feminist theology itself of the criticism that traditional theologians neglected to do justice to women's experience when they spoke in universalist, generic terms. Today, American feminist theologians are increasingly hesitant to generalize about women's experiences without distinguishing issues of class, race, etc. With this hesitation made explicit, Carol P. Christ sets out, in her *Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess*, to do "theology" by reflecting on the difficulties she began to have, while in graduate school, with the Christian and Judaic

***Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess**, by Carol Christ, Harper & Row, $15.95, 238 pp.*

traditions, and on her growing involvement in the Goddess movement. In the chapter, "Dialogues with God and Tradition," she responds to the criticism of the movement by feminist theologians such as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Rosemary Ruether, stating the shortcomings she sees in their positions. Several of the essays are especially valuable for bibliographical use and class reading — essays such as "Women's Liberation and the Liberation of God," "A Spirituality for Women," "Yahweh as Holy Warrior" (on the peace movement), "Why Women Need the Goddess," and "Symbols of Goddess and God in Feminist Theology."

With Allan Megill's *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*, we return to the distinction between sex and gender, set here against the optimistic Enlightenment belief that human beings are as knowable as the physical universe is — and to the same degree. Megill contrasts what he calls the traditional theological sense of crisis ("the metaphor of humanity stranded in a world without God or other absolutes on which we can depend") with his own sense of crisis (the metaphor of breaking with faith in progress and with history as a coherent sequence of meaningful events). The aesthetic is central to Megill's readings of these four philosophers. Hence, one of its

***Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida**, by Allan Megill, California, $10.95 paper, 399 pp.*

goals, seen especially in his reading of Michel Foucault, is to free sexuality from a "presumed natural substratum." With Friedrich Nietzsche, Foucault saw nature as an "invention of human subjectivity." Megill thinks that by an aesthetic consideration of these four prophets of extremity, public space will be created for changing reality. This is a most provocative book with important implications for religious understanding.

These books carve out complementary foci on gender and religion — a subject which so often seems either transparent or too complex to address. It was heartening to think new thoughts on the subject.

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(Continued from page 682)
manipulate him have discovered that on certain subjects, he has convictions of granite and cannot be moved. Star Wars, aid to the *contras,* and opposition to higher taxes are three such issues. A fourth was the rescue of the hostages in the Middle East. The Iran-*contra* hearings have made clear that to attain his objectives, he deceived Congress and his own secretaries of state and defense.

According to Wills, Reagan's role in his administrations is that of being his own advertising man.

> He is a passionate believer in his cause, and one who works hard to present it well. This means that he studies everything he and his government do very closely, but from a selective angle, looking first and most intently at what can be done to make the action or idea as attractive to as many people as possible. This gives him a focus that is admittedly partial, but extremely effective.

Wills compares him to Rosser Reeves, the advertising executive who developed the concept of the Unique Selling Proposition. The USP must be true but it need not be the whole truth or unique to the product for which it is used. Once discovered, the USP should be repeated tirelessly. Reeves used to say, "A great campaign will never wear itself out."

This exactly describes Reagan's approach to political rhetoric. The speech he made for Goldwater in 1964 was an adaptation of a speech he had delivered several hundred times to General Electric employees. Twenty-three years later, he continues to repeat his staple themes — patriotism, individualism, free enterprise, anti-Communism, the danger of big government. In the service of those themes, he juggles anecdotes, rearranges details, recalls the fake quotations from Marx and Lenin, and refurbishes one-liners, but the message never changes. He paints a distorted, cleaned-up picture of America's past based on the frontier myth, the happy small town, the absence of conflict between workers and owners of industry, the absence of racism, injustice, and poverty, a Disneyland version of the past.

Reagan draws the picture so credibly because he believes in it himself. A majority of Americans in the 1980s have wanted to believe in it too, because it is an image of themselves and their past that makes them feel comfortable. Like the Chicago Cub fans in Iowa a half-century ago, they know Reagan is pretending but they enjoy the pretense and want him to succeed in persuading them it is true. Little errors made no difference.

Only when the wire went dead, only when the pretense of mastery broke down in the Iran-*contra* affair did the storyteller lose his authority. Once the bleak facts of reality have obtruded into the scene, it is hard to recreate the magic. But Ronald Reagan continues to try. The audience has been distracted but the show must go on. .

IN SEARCH OF THE GREAT WEB

THE SONGLINES

Bruce Chatwin

Viking, $18.95, 293 pp.

Margaret Wimsatt

There are travel writers (Paul Fussell comes to mind for this generation, perhaps George Orwell for the preceding) who visit well-known places, familiar to some of us. Another group with at least as long a tradition in (not only English) letters, travels to extraordinary places, to land's end, to the rim of the world, and sends or brings back reports that few of us have the knowledge or experience to check. The Ladies Mary Wortley Montagu and Hester Stanhope, Doughty and Lawrence in Arabia, even E. M. Forster in imperial India — how can we stay-at-homes even begin to assess the accuracy of their works?

Bruce Chatwin belongs to the second group. He is best known for a straight book, *In Patagonia;* he has also written a novel set in Wales and a satire on the African slave trade. *The Songlines,* his latest, can best be described as quest essays, not very successfully linked. The title refers to the Dreamlines, mapped by the first ancestors of the Australian aborigines, who in the Dreamtime named, tamed, and hallowed the land by singing their way across and again across it. Songlines were also lines of kinships, of languages, of trade, and of something mysterious that Chatwin never quite penetrated, forming a giant web over all Australia. They are, of course, visible only to believers.

Early in the book, Chatwin tells us of his lifelong urge to travel. It is partly owed, he thinks, to the fact that he and his mother, having then no fixed home, spent the years of World War II wandering from relative to relative across southern England, and partly to the fact that the men in his father's family included a number of voyagers to places more exotic than they sound now: Paris, Cairo, the Yukon, even (Cousin Charlie) to Patagonia. Another possibility is the fact that after a few years appraising modern art for Sotheby's in London, he awoke one morning blind; the specialist he consulted advised changing to "long horizons," an effective prescription faith-

> *I have a vision of the songlines stretching across the continents and ages; that wherever men have trodden they have left a trail of song (of which we may, now and then, catch an echo); and that these trails must reach back, in time and space, to an isolated pocket in the African savannah, where the First Man opening his mouth in defiance of the terrors that surrounded him, shouted the opening stanza of the world song, "I AM!"*
>
> — *Bruce Chatwin*
> The Songlines

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Time's Covenant

The Essays and Sermons of William Clancy

EDITED BY EUGENE GREEN

Journalist, editor, and priest, William Clancy was a major spokesman for liberal Catholicism in America. This collection draws on his written and spoken work—from *Commonweal,* the *New York Times, Worldview,* and the pulpit.

Photo: Steven Kibert

Clancy was "a graceful and eloquent thinker. Whether reflecting on the meaning of the term liberal Catholic, on the Dreyfus case, on poetry or the scriptures, [he] is a bridge-builder, opening a trove of cultural and spiritual richness that goes beyond parochialism."—*Publishers Weekly*

"His observations and exhortations, balanced and beautifully written, deal with a wide variety of issues ranging from freedom of expression and liberal Catholicism to Santayana, Toynbee, and Lippmann. As a whole, the book serves as a fine model for Catholics and others who are trying to steer a straight course through the storms raised by conservatives and liberals in the churches today."—*Library Journal*

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—Arthur J. Moore, *Christianity and Crisis*

With other editors of *Commonweal,* he "fleshed out the body of opinion, attitudes, analyses, and judgment that came to be associated with the term "Commonweal Catholic." At its frequent best it represented and articulated a generosity of spirit, keen moral and intellectual discrimination, and a notable civility of manner and discourse."—James Finn, *Commonweal*

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fully followed. The horizons we briefly glimpse in this book include many of the less-inhabited places of the Old World, glimpsed or studied for longer periods. Chronologically, the last field to have been considered at length makes up the book's first half.

My reason for coming to Australia was to try to learn for myself, and not from other men's books, what a songline was — and how it worked. Obviously, I was not going to get to the heart of the matter, nor would I want to. I have asked a friend in Adelaide if she knows of an expert.

Luckily, she did. Chatwin, arriving in Alice Springs, near the center of the country, was fortunate to find Arkady Volchok who became not only his guide but his friend. Born in Australia of émigré Russian parents, Volchok was the divorced father of a six-year-old daughter, and owner, apparently, only of "a harpsichord and a shelf of books." (This does not account for walls lined with aerial photographs, not the tools necessary for mapping!) He was at the time engaged in mapping the songlines (Dreamtracks, Footprints of the Ancestors), along a 300-mile course from Alice Springs to Darwin so that they might not be disturbed, might at the least be recorded, when a proposed new railway came to be built on that route. His job was to find the appropriate Aboriginals, drive them to various spots, and persuade them to tell him which places had been called into being by a Dreamtime hero.

He had by the time Chatwin arrived won considerable confidence from the (Walbiri) tribal leaders — perhaps because he found their concept, singing the world into existence, so beautiful. In any case, he was able to introduce this stranger (a "Pom" to the natives) and include him in expeditions to the back country, described in sometimes horrifying detail. (The kangaroo who refused to die though repeatedly killed reminds one of the beast in Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant.") His feelings about these objects of his study are decidedly mixed; they resemble those Volchok expresses near the beginning of the book: "There were times, in the flyblown squalor of a Walbiri camp, when he suspected . . . that his vocation to help the blacks was either willful self-indulgence or a waste of time."

Someplace along the way, a little more than halfway through the book, Volchok leaves his guest for a period of time in a lonesome but well-furnished caravan, and Chatwin pulls out the notebooks that record his reactions to southern Africa. There his interest is not in the living but in the dead, in the development of *homo habilis*. He talks with archaeologists and ethnologists, including Raymond Dart and Robert Brain at Witwatersrand University, and with the latter visits sites where relevant material has been gathered. His interest is in establishing that the human race was "intended" to be nomadic, and that its troubles began when it settled down in fixed dwelling places. This charming but unlikely notion (it is not well enough developed to be called a thesis) is buttressed by innumerable quotations — from a Sumerian text, Jeremiah, Blake, Verlaine — and occasionally interrupted to return to doings in the neighborhood of Alice Springs. In spite of including interesting fragments, this weighty digression totally unbalances the book.

Chatwin's mind is pictorial (perhaps the reason for his success at Sotheby's?), and he transmits strongly to the reader the eerie, cobwebby effect of this mesh over all Australia, and the sense of how real it is to the Aboriginals — even the watered-down versions which are all they will allow the invaders to share. When old Alan tells and mimes the travels of the Lizard Ancestor, which ends with his becoming in death the hill they are all looking at, his white audience almost suspends disbelief, and the reader too is touched. There are a few nice descriptions of scenery, and lively char-

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acterizations, of Arkady and Marian, the girlfriend he marries, of the old people and the new settlers, done with a firm touch. So — readers who are expecting a treatise and like things neatly packaged will be dismayed by this book. Others may find many small pleasures in the reading, even while they wish the book had a center, and a completed idea to transmit.

IN BRIEF

THE CHARMED CIRCLE. THEOLOGY FOR THE HEAD, HEART, HANDS AND FEET. *By Robert Masson. Sheed and Ward, $10.95, 250 pp.*

This is a fine introduction to theology that aims at avoiding the false dichotomies that often beset us between faith and understanding, action and spirituality, God's transcendence and immanence. It is accessible to a general audience, and has a pedagogically impeccable style making it well-suited for the classroom.

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Christianity is presented as a "charmed circle" — charmed meaning either something inherently bewitched and superstitious, or delightful and promising. Masson shows that despite the proclivity of many (individuals and churches, past and present) toward the former, the latter is in fact the case, making the Christian vision a viable option for modern people. An exceptionally broad range of material is used to accomplish such a project, ranging from apocalyptic literature to liberation theology and including an aesthetic blend of the religious experience of slaves with an exegesis of the creation stories. What is more, the book will serve as an accessible entry into Karl Rahner's thought, and one that avoids the common error that Rahner doesn't start with faith but with the human being.

One is hesitant to note an omission in so well-conceived and delivered a book as this. There is a stream of reflection existing alongside (and often compatible with) Rahner's own reassessment of Neo-Scholasticism that yields a richer ecclesiology than Masson provides. The likes of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Henri de Lubac, not found in the index, offer a sacramentally rooted methodology that gives the Eucharist (and the full doctrinal heritage rooted therein) more centrality; it can be argued that such a position must be included to truly overcome the dichotomies that Masson's book wrestles with so well.

MARK LOWERY

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 642)

taboos and the brutalization of the underprivileged young in New York City, where the best that the educational system proposes to offer an eleven-year-old girl is a condom or an abortion. And even if it's too late, I'd like to ask Catholic conservatives and liberals alike to stop talking about childbearing as though it were a disease. A folly, if you like — but just possibly full of grace, like giving all to the poor.

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